

GRADU^{PD}ATE

Dear Graduate Student,

Entering the world of graduate school can be a scary proposition. Not only is the task of course work, TA-ing, performing research (for others and yourself!) and, ultimately, writing a thesis or dissertation overwhelming, you may also be adjusting to a new school, apartment, and/or adviser. **Luckily, many graduate students have successfully walked this path before and can offer advice on how to survive graduate school.**

The following advice has been provided by Chuck Fidler, as documented in The Chronicle of Higher Education. Dr. Fidler is now working in academia as an Assistant Professor and offers many useful suggestions for new (and more experienced) graduate students.

Remind yourself regularly that there is an end. It is easy to become overwhelmed throughout your graduate studies career. In the early stages, it may seem very different from your undergraduate years and the “new-ness” may lead to stress. Remind yourself that you will get through it all.

Find a way to relax. Feeling stressed about everything will not help you get anything done. Make sure to take regular breaks from your computer, give yourself some nights off from school-related tasks, and maintain some of the activities that help you to relax: listening to music, exercising, making nice meals, reading for fun.

You are not alone, however much it may seem like it. Graduate work is often solitary. However, there is no reason why you can't share your thoughts and ideas with others from your department so that you decrease your feelings of isolation. This process can also help you to develop a new and fresh perspective on your research.

Research is hard. Learning how to conduct valid research is an arduous process. Seek out help! And remember, graduate school is the time to make mistakes. Remind yourself that you are a student and you are here to learn.

Establish a good rapport with your adviser. Your adviser is called an adviser for a reason. They are there to guide you through your graduate work, set milestones throughout your program, and make sure you stay on track. Set up regular meetings so that you can make the most of this important academic relationship.

Be passionate about your work. Select a research topic that you are highly interested in. Be sure it is what you would like to research as selecting a topic because it is popular or easy often ends badly.

References

Fidler, C. (2012). What I learned about surviving graduate school. <http://chronicle.com/article/What-I-Learned-About-Surviving/131247/>

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