



Envisioning your career: Developing your professional mission

Rebecca L Williams-Karnesky, MD, PhD, MEdPsych

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Resident Research Toolkit

Three things to think about...

- Define your priorities
- Develop a professional mission statement
- Create goals to advance towards your vision

Three things to think about...

- Define your priorities

What are your priorities?

The 3x5 card exercise

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(4. _____)

My (current) priorities

9/25/2025

1. Be a present, loving, reliable mother & wife
2. Provide patients with safe, compassionate care
3. Empower learning, connection and joy in the surgical learning environment
4. Build community

What are your priorities?

This is your time to daydream about yourself!



Three things to think about...

- Define your priorities
- Develop a professional mission statement

Why develop a professional vision and mission?



- Bravery and resilience
- Mentoring
- **Having a vision**
- Optimism
- Developing networks
- Clinical credibility
- Recognition of opportunity

Develop your mission statement

Mission is what you're trying to do, vision is what happens when you do it

- **What is your vision?** (dream)
- **What is your mission?** (purpose)

Develop your mission statement

- Mission is what you're trying to do, vision is what happens when you do it
 - What is your vision?
 - What is your mission?
- **Why have a mission statement?**
 - **How will you get there?**
 - **What tools do you need?**

My (current) professional vision

My vision is the continuous cultivation of joy in the process of learning, teaching, and patient care in surgery.

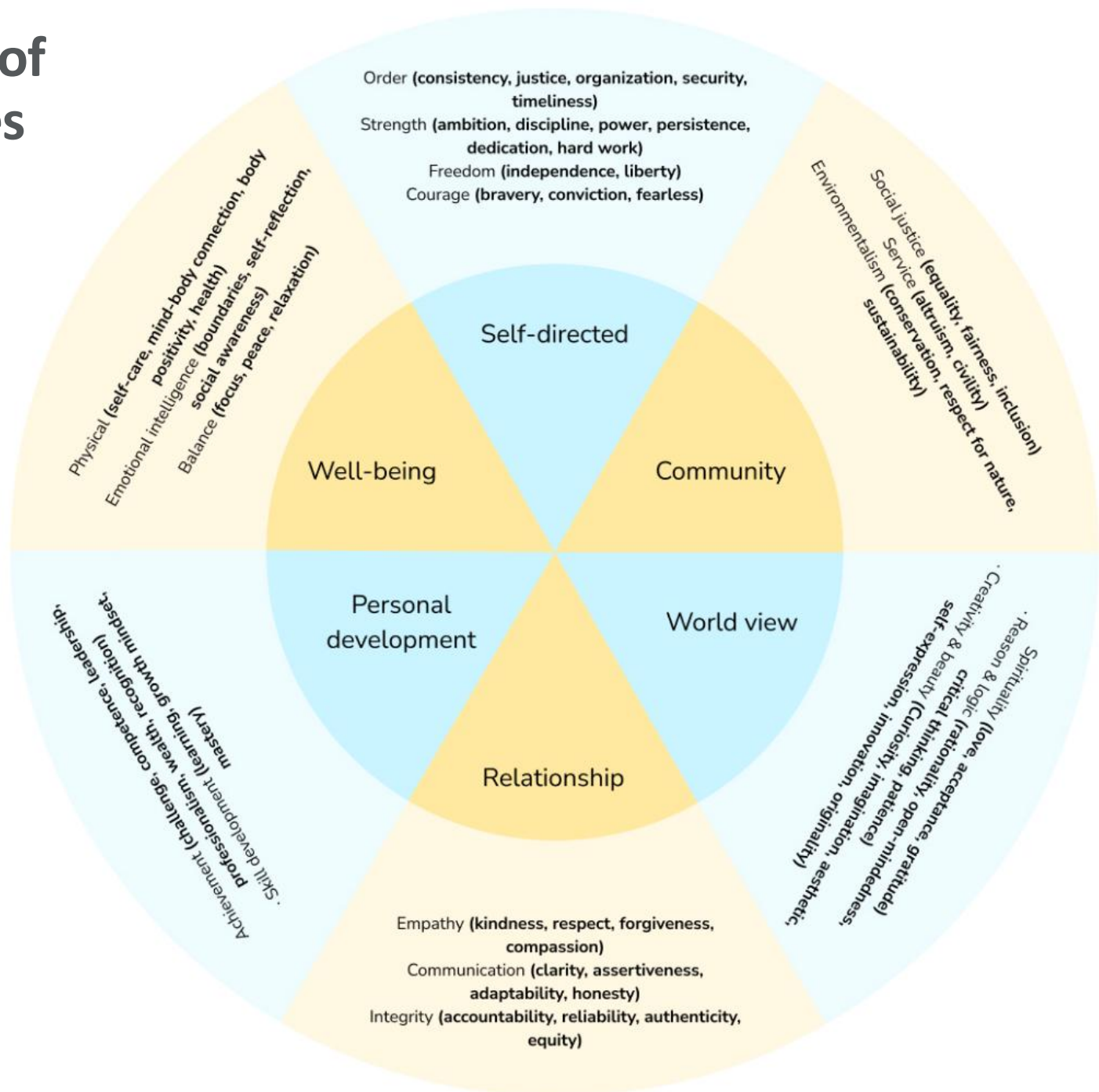
My (current) professional mission statement

*My mission is to create a **culture of inclusivity and psychological safety** in the surgical learning environment by using my **skills as an educational researcher** to empower learning and teaching behaviors, build interdisciplinary collaboration, enhance provider wellbeing, and improve patient care.*

Develop your professional mission statement

- **Reflect on your core values:**
 - Consider the principles and beliefs that matter most to you.
 - *What drives you professionally?*
 - *What do you admire in colleagues and leaders?*
 - *What qualities do you most want to embody in your work?*
 - *What do you value most in your relationships with others?*

Examples of core values



Develop your professional mission statement

- **Identify your skills and passions:**
 - Think about the tasks you most enjoy and where you have consistently excelled.
 - *What are your key personal and professional strengths?*
 - *What are you passionate about doing at work?*
 - *What unique talents and abilities do you have to offer?*

Develop your professional mission statement

- **Define your goals and legacy:**
 - Consider your professional aspirations for the next 5 to 10 years. Your mission statement should align with where you ultimately want to be in your career.
 - *What do you hope to achieve professionally?*
 - *What kind of impact do you want to have in your industry or community?*
 - Look beyond your immediate goals to the long-term impact you want to create. This can provide greater context and motivation for your daily work.
 - *How do you want to be remembered by others?*
 - *What positive change do you want to leave behind?*

Develop your professional mission statement

- **Draft your statement!**

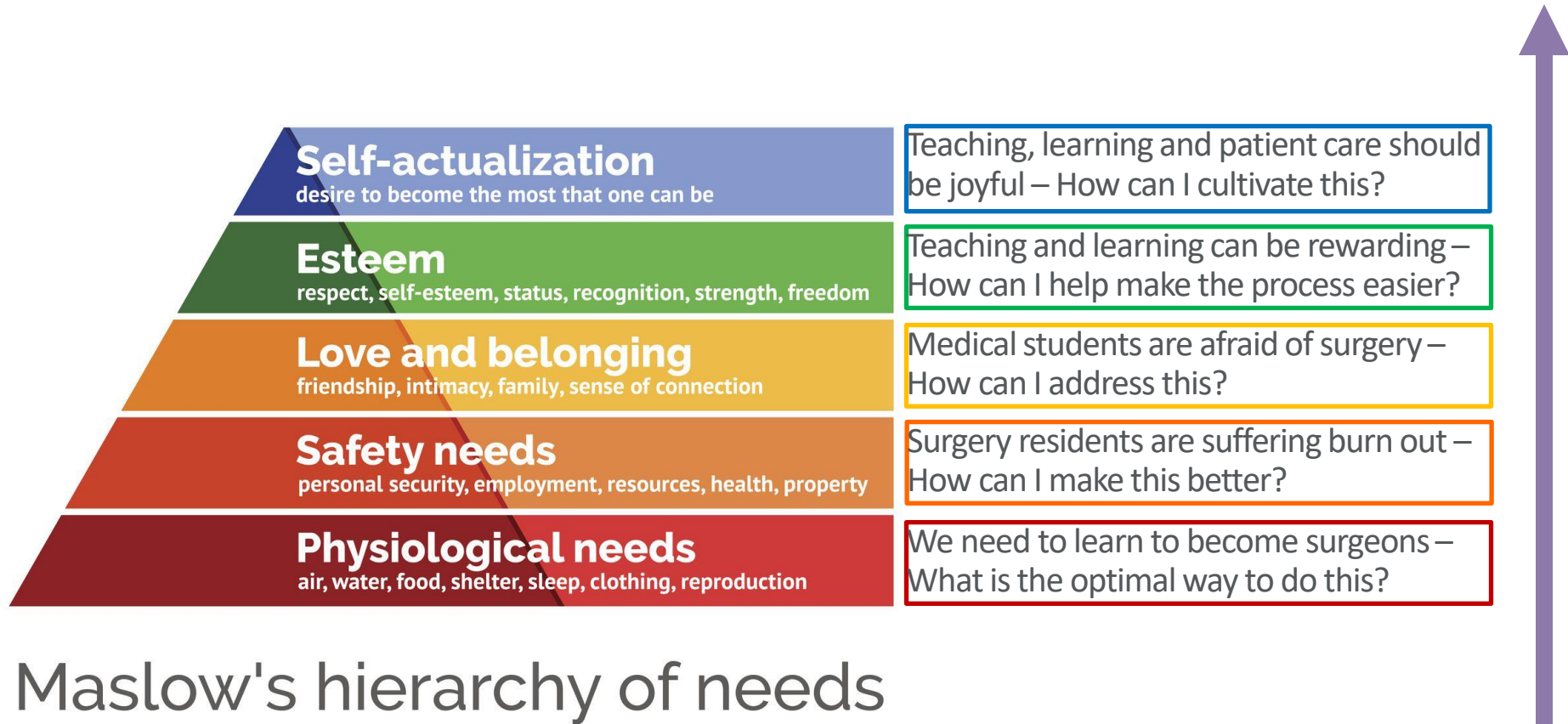
- Combine the insights from the previous steps into a single, concise sentence or two. Use strong, action-oriented language.
- *What do you want to do?*
- *Who do you want to do it for?*
- *How will you do it?*
- *What is the benefit?*

“My mission is to [action] for [audience] by [skills] to [desired result]”

Develop your professional mission statement

- **Revise as you grow!**

An example of how my professional mission & vision for my career in surgical education has evolved over time



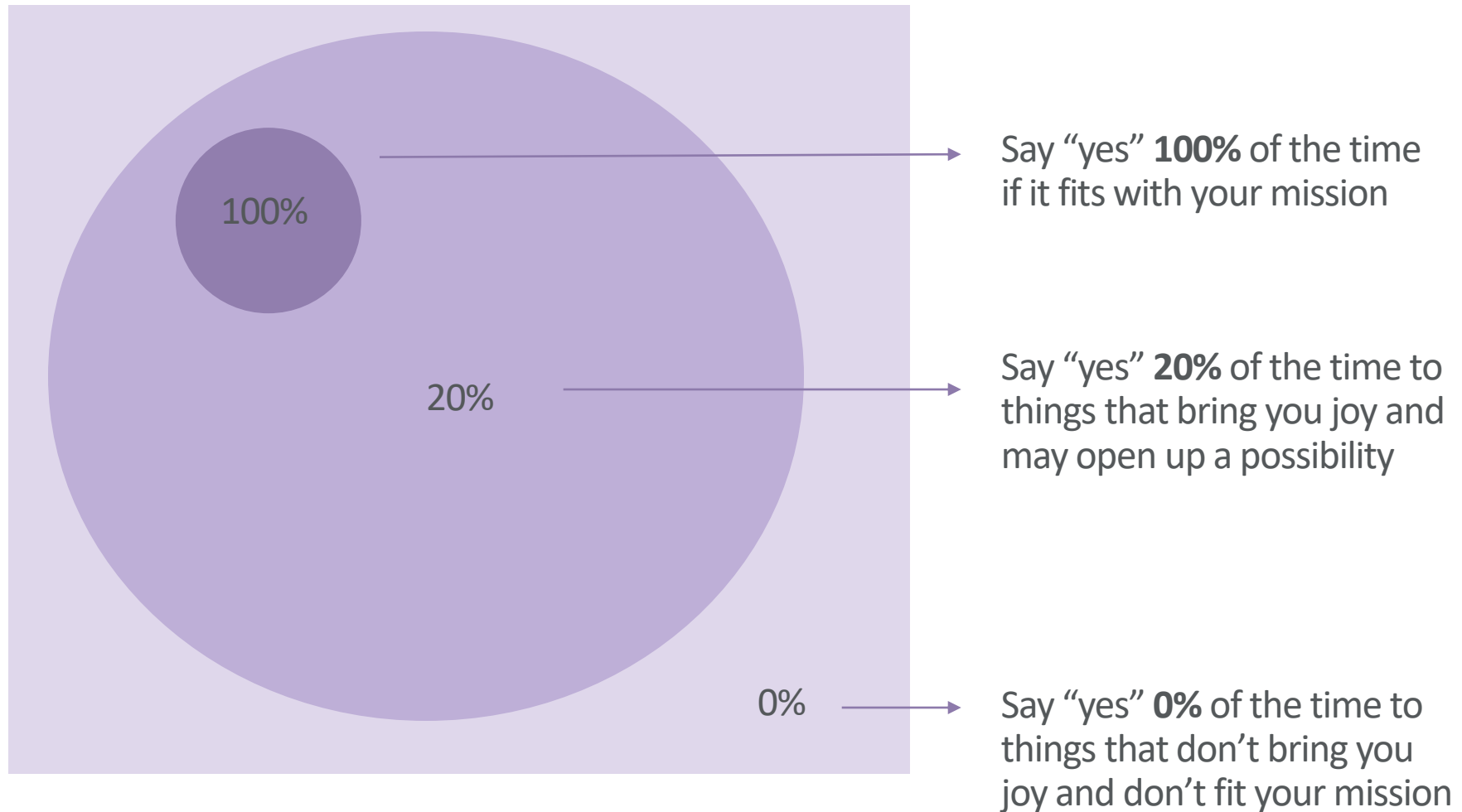
Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Three Four things to think about...

- Define your priorities
- Develop a professional mission statement
- Saying “no”

Saying “No”

Using your mission to guide you



Saying “No”

Some words to use

1. Thank you for considering me. I would really like to say yes.
2. I have some other priorities that I need to complete right now.
3. Have you considered asking X? They have expressed interest in this and already has a model that works well.
4. Please keep me in mind, though, if something similar comes up in the future. If I can finish the things I am working on, I would love to consider it again.

Three Four things to think about...

- Define your priorities
- Develop a professional mission statement
- Saying “no”
- Create goals to advance towards your vision

Create goals to advance towards your vision

An IDP can help with this!

Create goals to advance towards your vision



Ultimately, one should aim for fulfillment and **impact for the sake of impact**, not impact for the sake of promotions or expanding a CV.

Content inspired by Kimberly Manning, MD and Grace Huang, MD

Create goals to advance towards your vision

SKILL-BUILDING



Gaining depth

Learning

- **Gaining depth**
 - What do you need to build expertise?
- **Learning**
 - What resources might help you?

I have experience or am proficient in these research skills:

I plan to develop these research skills:

Skill desired:	How it will be learned:
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Future Professional Development Activities: List any professional development skills you want to develop

What do I hope to learn?	How will I learn it?

As a learner, I am good at these areas:

As a learner, I need to work on these areas:

Area for improvement:	Strategy to address:

As a teacher, I am good at these areas:

As a teacher, I need to work on these areas:

Area for improvement:	Strategy to address:

Clinically, I am proficient in these areas:

Clinically, I plan to improve on these areas (short and intermediate included):

Area for improvement:	Strategy to address:

Create goals to advance towards your vision



Dissemination

Presentation

Publication

Visibility

- **Visibility – Get involved!**
 - Local
 - Regionally
 - Nationally
- **Dissemination**
 - How can you communicate to others about your work?

My current active research projects: (Add additional projects if necessary)

Project Title/Topic	
Purpose/Research Question	
My Role	
Primary Mentor	
Update Since Last Meeting	
Next Step/Issues for Discussion	
Papers and their status (<i>under development, awaiting feedback from mentors, submitted, in press, etc.</i>):	
Abstract status (<i>writing, submitted, accepted, etc.</i>)	

Professional Organization, Professional Society, and Committee Memberships

Organization/Society/Committee Membership (include institutional and other affiliations)	Committee, taskforce, or other roles	Dates

Create goals to advance towards your vision



Mentorship

Finding a
community

Wellness

- **Mentorship – build a team**

- Mentors



- Coaches



- Sponsors



- **Community – find your people!**

- Local

- Regionally

- Nationally

- **Wellness**

- Reflect on your priorities

Who are your mentor(s)? You can have a mentoring team (e.g., primary research mentor, clinical mentor, methodological mentor, peer mentor).

Create goals to advance towards your vision



Leadership

Program
development

Upward career
trajectory

- **Leadership**
 - Locally
 - Regionally
 - Nationally
- **Program development**
 - What can you build for others?
- **Upward career trajectory**
 - What does success look like to you?
 - It is ok if this changes as you grow!

Three Four things to think about...

- Define your priorities
 - Write down your top 3-4 priorities and review them regularly, they may change!
- Develop your professional mission statement
 - Mission is what you're trying to do (purpose), vision is what happens when you do it (dream)
- Create goals to advance towards your vision
 - Skill building, reputation, support, growth
 - Use your IDP!
- **Practice saying “no”**

Thank You!

Preparation

Completing the following statements may help you determine the focus and wording of your personal mission statement.

I am at my best when . . .

I am at my worst when . . .

I am truly happy when . . .

I want to be a person who . . .

Someday I would like to . . .

My deepest positive emotions come when . . .

My greatest talents and best gifts are . . .

When all is said and done, the most important things in life are . . .

Possible life goals for me are . . .

Review

Writing a mission statement requires deep reflection about who we are and what our purpose is. Review your mission statement when it is still in draft form. Ask yourself the following questions.

Does my mission statement ...

Bring out the best in me?

Challenge and motivate me?

Communicate my vision and values?

Address significant roles in my life?

Express timelines, proven principles that produce quality of life results?

Represent the unique contribution I can make to society?