

Transitioning to faculty position

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Background and academic path

- Grew up on a tiny tropical island in the southern Caribbean called Grenada.
- Moved to New York at age 17 to study Chemical Engineering at the City College of New York; (2006-2010).
- PhD in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering from Johns Hopkins University, (focus on single-cell technologies — cancer and aging; (2010-2015)
- Postdoc at Weill Cornell Medicine with a focus on Hematologic malignancies (Lymphoma microenvironment) (2016-2020)
- Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins University (2020-now)



Key points about the faculty transition process

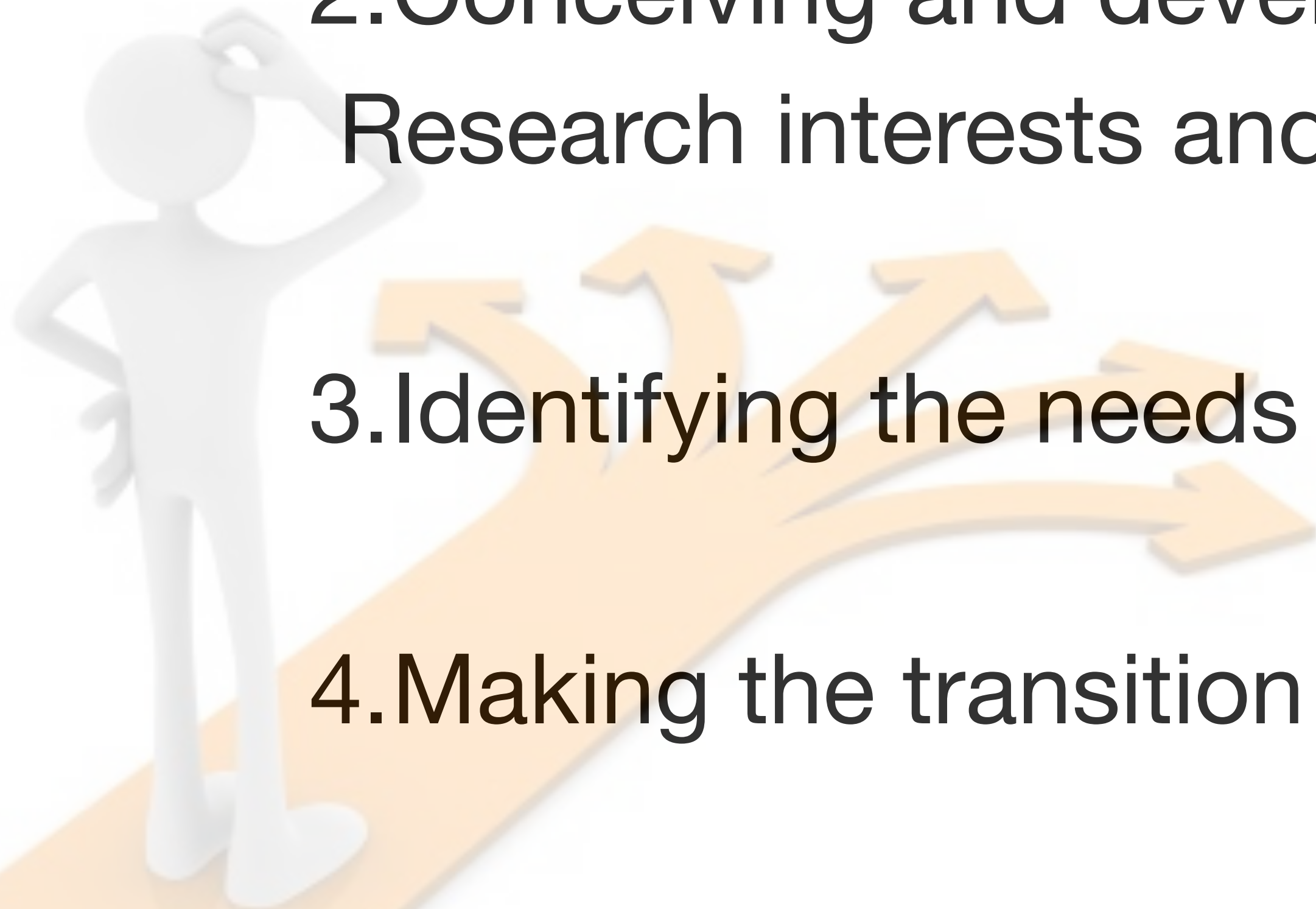
1. Identifying when is the 'right' time to make the transition.

2. Conceiving and developing a structured research program.

Research interests and lab focus?...

3. Identifying the needs that will enable my success as a PI.

4. Making the transition



When is the 'right' time to transition?

• How do I know when I am ready to transition?



Points to consider:

1. Do I feel ready for the transition? **Confidence...**
2. Do my mentors/advisors/PIs think that I am ready? **Support...**
3. Do I have the 'demonstrated experience' (e.g. publications), interesting questions (not only to me), support structure and foundation? **Vision and potential...**
4. Do I have experience writing/articulating my research ideas in a clear and concise way? **Fundability...**
5. Do I have a strategy to execute my research program? **Independence...**

Defining my research interests and focus of lab

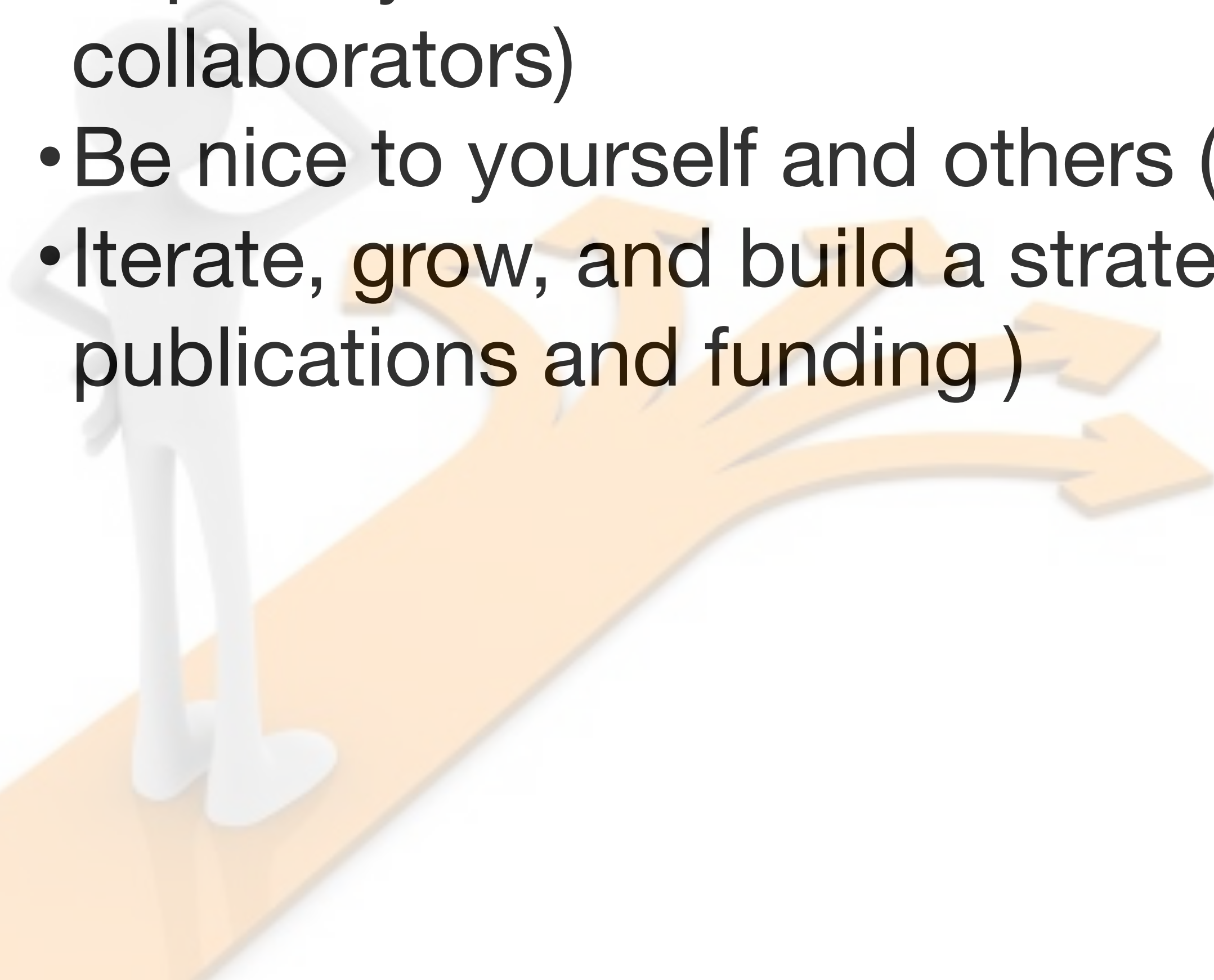
- How do you go from a structured, mentored environment in your Postdoc/PhD lab to building your research vision?
- How can I leverage my interests/passions, background/expertise, holes in the field to build this successful/fundable research program?
- How do I develop a research program that is different enough from my previous advisors to enable scientific growth and eventual impact? Demonstrating independence

What do I need to build a successful program?

- **What do I need in terms of an **institution**?**
 - Resources/expertise/infrastructure (e.g. startup, hospital, clinical collaborators, etc.)
 - Support structure (e.g. diversity/culture, # of junior faculty, subject matter experts, etc.)
 - Potential for growth/improvement (personal and professional)
 - Research intensive, (*i.e.* University vs. research institute vs. PUIs)
- **What do I need for **personal satisfaction and happiness**?**
 - Proximity to family/friends/support (e.g. location, accessibility, etc.)
 - Opportunities and activities for spouse/partner, kids
 - Feel good things (e.g. weather, hobbies)
 - Prioritization and balance

Making to transitioning

- **Transition and change is never easy, but it is doable!**
 - Prepare ... prepare ... prepare
 - Trust the process and your preparation
 - Expand your network of mentors and grow your team (trainees, collaborators)
 - Be nice to yourself and others (some things are outside your control)
 - Iterate, grow, and build a strategy that works (e.g. approach to publications and funding)



Summary and take-home points

- Develop a strategy for transitioning and prepare for it (*i.e.* timeline, plan for publications, grants, etc.).
- Surround yourself with people who believe in you and your potential, even when you don't see it.
- Surround yourself with people who will challenge you, ask the tough questions, and keep you accountable.
- Activate your network. Let your 'people' know what you want to do.