Finding your strengths

Crafting a personal vision of success

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Brutally honest subtitle: Lessons Learned from an Accidental Career

- software developer
- educator
- textbook author
- CS researcher
- CS professor

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The life algorithm that worked for me

1. say yes to what intimidates you
2. say no to what doesn’t challenge you
3. think for yourself
4. speak for yourself

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To have a plan, to not have a plan ...

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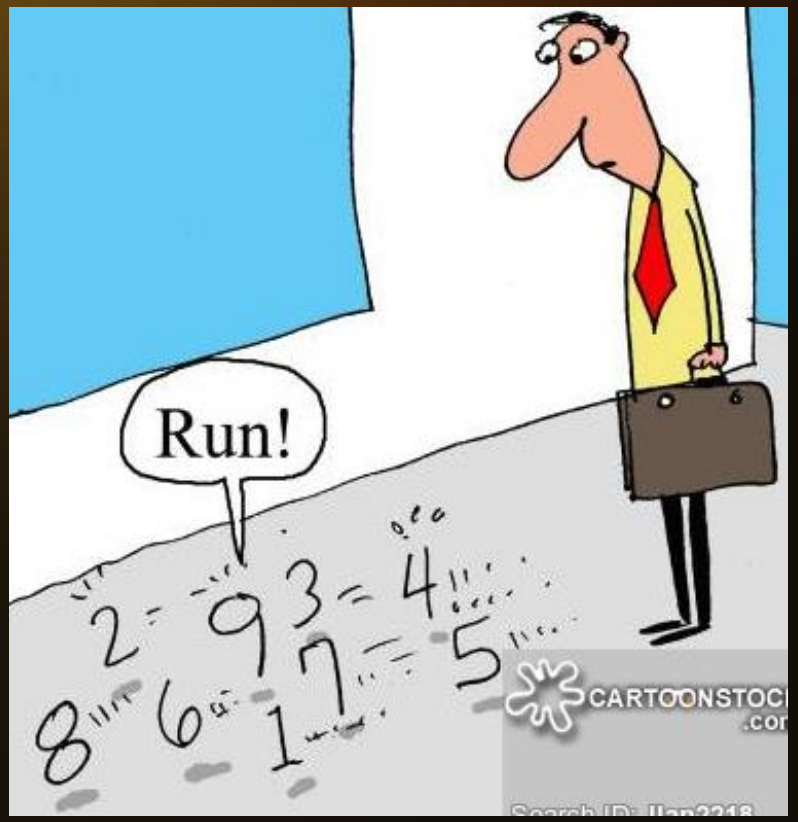
My path part 1: undergrad

1. say yes to what intimidates you



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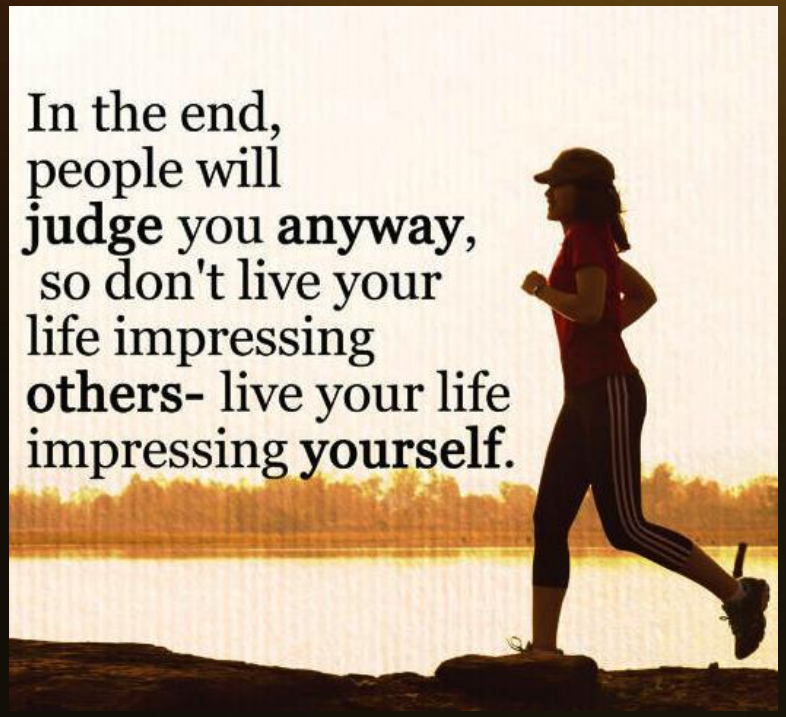
My path part 2: first professional jobs

- Rule 3: think for yourself



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My path part 2: first professional jobs

- who should be the assistant manager?
- speak for yourself (rule 4)

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My path part 2: first professional jobs

- landed a big client due to rule 3 and 4: I'll say what I really think

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My path part 3: back to school for MS CS

- one of few women, which at first I found intimidating
- Rule 1: try something that intimidates you

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My path part 4: motherhood

- ok, I would never have had the courage to follow my Rule 1 here, but nature had other plans
- Rule 3: go with your instincts and even put aside your own prejudices

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My path part 5: Textbook author

- Rule 1: Try something that intimidates you

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My path part 6: school teacher

- Rule 3: Follow your own instincts and shut out the noise

- eventually Rule 2: I was bored

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My path part 7: get a PhD

- Rule 1: Try something that intimidates you

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My path part 8: CS Professor

- Rule 1 again

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What’s next?

- I have no idea but I love where I am right now

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Defining success

- only you can judge your success
- ignore the culture when it tells you that you need x amount of $$$, to drive y car, or live in neighborhood z, because you are more than a consumer
- ignore the culture when it tells you that the way you look is not good enough
- ignore the culture when it tries to insulate you from “others”

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A little philosophical diversion

- you are rich in potential for creativity and happiness, but outside forces will fight against you
- above all, maintain your independence

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What are your strengths?

What is your personal vision of success?

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