Introduction: How I Became an Academic Nag

- Why This Book
- What’s Here
- My Methods and Techniques
- Why Me?
  - I Never Left School
  - From Professor to Typist
  - To Coach and Editor
  - Disclosure: My Writing (Mostly Nonacademic)
- A Word About the Spiritual
- “Academic Nag”

PART ONE: SNEAKING UP ON THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1. The Decision: Your Dream, Your Life

- How Is the Degree Part of Your Life’s Dream?
- What Will the Degree Do for You?
- Visualize Your Dream
- Affirmations for Strengthening Your Life Dream
- As They Say, Meditate, Don’t Medicate
2. BIG Changes

- It's Not Just College Anymore
- How Ready Are You to Change Your Lifestyle?
  - No Structure
  - No Leisure
- It's Your Time
- Declare and Feel Your Readiness

PART TWO: REALLY DOING IT

3. Priorities and Promises to Yourself

- Your Inner Mentor: Listening for Answers
- Rethink Your Priorities
- Find the Holes in Your Schedule
- Keep Your Promises to Yourself
- Your Later List
- Affirm Your Right Time and Timing

4. Enroll Your Higher Self

- Hello, Light Being!
- Trust the Process
- Three Puzzling and Powerful Reinforcing Laws
  - The Law of Least Effort
  - The Law of Intention and Desire
  - The Law of Detachment
• Recognize and Accept Your Power

• A Few Higher Self Affirmations

5. Starting the Work: Positive Patient Persevering

• Listen for the Topic That’s Right for You
  o Topic Considerations
  o Right Topic Considerations

• You’re the Scholar in Shining Armor

• Muster Your Courage for the Proposal
  o What’s Your Problem?
  o Courageous Affirmations

• You Don’t Have to Walk a Straight (Out)Line

• Tricks to Tease and Ease Yourself into It

• Writing Doesn’t Have to Be Torture: Proper Style and Semipleasant Process

• Settle In: You Deserve It

6. Sticking With It: Temptations and Tonics

• Dissertation Interruptus

• Death by Rationale

• Resisting the Extension Siren

• Getting Sick . . . of It All

• Fear of Finishing

• Discipline Is a Choice

• Continuing the Work: Your Wayward Outline

• If You’re Concerned About Your Brain
• Reasonable Breaks and Balance
  - Working Questions
  - Balanced Breaks
• Affirmations for Sticking With It

PART THREE: YOUR NEAR, DEAR, AND DESPAIRING
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

7. Orient the Important Others in Your Life
• Stranger in a Strange Graduate School Culture
• Family and Friends: Starting Off Wrong
• Starting Off Right
  - Selfish?
  - Saying No
• Sacrifices and Rewards: Short-Term, Mid-Term, Interminable-Term
  - Educate Them
  - Bribe Them

8. Family: Choruses of Complaints, Songs of Support
• Partners: “I Didn’t Bargain for This” or “I Never See You Anymore”
• Kids: “We Never See You Anymore”
• Involve Them: Share What You’re Doing
  - Involving Partners
  - Involving Kids
• Special Dates With Partners and Kids
  o Dates With Partners
  o Dates With Kids

• Other Relatives: “We Never See You Anymore”
  o Educate and Bribe, Again
  o Sabotage, Unconscious or Not

• Holiday Strategies

• Toxic Volleys and Tough Questions
  o Your Neutralizing Responses
  o Hard Questions and Your Brilliant Answers

• Troubled Waters: Fights, Separation, Divorce

• See Them Whole
  o Send Love Ahead
  o See Them Supportive

9. Friends: Are They for You or Against You?

• “Come On—It’s Only a Quick Lunch”: Just Say Not Now

• Community Involvement and Volunteer Activities: Just Say Later

• Handle Jealousies and Putdowns

• Let Go of the Crazymakers

• Those Questions Again: “Aren’t You Done Yet?”

• Assure Them You Still Love Them

• Know and Believe They Are For and With You
10. Make Peace and Time With Your Employer and Work Colleagues

- Express Your Gratitude and Explain, Explain
- Point Out How Your Degree Benefits the Company
- Negotiate What Works for Both of You
- Superior Jealousies
  - Recognize Toxicity
  - Toxicity Antidotes
- Work Colleagues’ Envy
- Affirm, Visualize, and Project Employment Peace

PART FOUR: GOOD UNIVERSITY COPS AND BAD

11. Your Dissertation Committee: The Best/Worst Friends You’ll Ever Have

- Are Professors Really Human?
- Excruciating or Exceptional?
- Who Can You Work With and How Do You Know?
  - Gather Plenty of Information
  - Ask Questions About the Chair
- Listen Inside: Gut and Guidance
  - Ask Questions of Yourself
  - How Do You Feel?
- Design and See Your Perfect Committee
12. Dancing With the Committee

- *Whose* Topic?

- Buddying Up or Keeping Too Distant
  - Chums
  - Strangers
  - The Ideal Balance

- Playing Humble Student and Keeping Your Self-Respect
  - Swallow Your Pride
  - Raise Your Head

- When You’re Older Than Your Professors

- The Infinite Loop of Revisions

- Appealing to Higher Authorities
  - On the Ground
  - In Your Head

- Your Higher Self and Theirs
  - Psychologically Speaking
  - Spiritually Speaking


- Fellow Students as Mentors

- What Can You Learn From Learning Centers?

- You *Can* Speak to the Geeks in the Computer Lab
• Add to Your Team: Statisticians and Researchers
  o Statisticians
  o Researchers
• Librarians Love You, Secretaries Stand By You
  o Librarians
  o Secretaries
• Consider Coaches and Editors
  o Coaches
  o Editors
• Old Course Professors Don’t Have to Fade Away
• Picture the Perfect University Friends You Need

PART FIVE: GRADUATION: IT’S ONLY A WALK AWAY

14. Am I Really Almost Done?
  • Rehearse Your Perfect Defense
  • Yet Another Faculty Review
  • Master the Red Tape
  • How to Enjoy Your Own Graduation
  • Avoid Post-Parting Depression (PPD)

15. Waking to Your Dream
  • The Most Dangerous Time . . .
  • Envision Your Future, Take the Steps
  • Peek at Your Long-Neglected Later List
• Reenter Your Family’s Atmosphere

• Plan Your Payoffs
  o Positions
  o Publications

• Celebrate Your Professional and Personal Growth With Gratitude

**Conclusion: Why I’m Still an Academic Nag**

References

Selected Resources

A Short Glossary of Important Acronyms

About the Author