Thanks for meeting with me…

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language

Naledi Saul, Director
I'm your mentor

Managing Your Relationship With Your Mentor

How they communicate

Conflict style

How many hours should you be in lab?

Functions

How often will you meet?

What can you take with you when you leave?

How they communicate

How they give feedback

When will they read your paper/manuscript?

Want the slides/assessment tool?

career.ucsf.edu/ManageUp

The Manage Up Series

UCSF Office of Career & Professional Development
Student Academic Affairs
Everyone deserves to belong to a healthy, functioning workplace.

Our UCSF Community
3,198 Students, 1,111 postdocs = 4,309

Our Goal

Every single student and postdoc at UCSF has the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate your career successfully.

Our 2 Minute Ask

1. Try anything you learned today
2. Tell someone else
3. Share the slides
4. Give a person a card
5. Put up a flyer (or take one down)
6. Normalize it…on social media
   UCSFOCPD 📸 🌟
7. Give us feedback
8. Come back….and bring a friend
9. Greet each other on campus
10. Do your thing
What will you learn today?

Define what negotiation is and why you will need to negotiate with your research mentor.

Assess if you’re ready to engage your research mentor.

Describe steps to reflect and prep for a conversation. What do you need to know? How can you find what you need?

Articulate your ‘open’. Consider different approaches to introduce the conversation.

Discuss strategies to “work with the yes,” “work with the no,” and “work with the fog” (the maybe).

Consider next steps to manage your relationship.
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- Consider next steps to manage your relationship.

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language
What’s the basis for our work today?

It’s annoying, but there isn’t one resource that perfectly encompasses effective negotiation for biomedical students and postdocs.
What’s a negotiation?

What is Negotiation? “A back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.”

Getting to Yes

The Gold Standard

Naledi, why are you calling this a ‘negotiation’ and not ‘career conversation’ with my research mentor?
Why do we say ‘negotiation’ and not ‘career conversation’?

What is Negotiation? “A back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.”

Getting to Yes

Your research mentor has multiple roles

- Mentoring Role
- Supervisory Role
- Educator Role

Naledi, why are you calling this a ‘negotiation’ and not ‘career conversation’ with my research mentor?

You have the same goals. Your metrics of success are their metrics of success.

- But at times, almost everyone has different goals and benchmarks for success than their instructor and their supervisor.
- So, at times, you will need to negotiate for what you need.
What’s the basis for our work today?

It’s annoying, but there isn’t one resource that perfectly encompasses effective negotiation for biomedical students and postdocs.

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<td>ANDREW B. THURLOW</td>
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<td>OVER ONE MILLION COPIES SOLD</td>
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<td>OF THE HARVARD NEGOTIATION PROJECT</td>
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Consider next steps to manage your relationship.

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language
Let's play a(n assessment) game: Are You Ready?

1. Do you know what you want or need?  
   - No  
   - Yes

2. Great! Do you know what you want, need, and is reasonable to ask for from your PI?  
   - No  
   - Yes

3. Fantastic! Do you have concerns about talking to your PI?  
   - Yes  
   - No

4. Excellent. Do you know the time and method your PI optimally prefers to engage in these types of conversation with students and postdocs?  
   - No  
   - Yes

Know yourself:

1. Do you know what you want or need?  
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Know your PI:

4. Excellent. Do you know the time and method your PI optimally prefers to engage in these types of conversation with students and postdocs?  
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5. Wonderful! Based on your goals and needs, your PI's preferences and your understanding of the situation, do you how you'll execute these conversations?  
   - No  
   - Yes

6. Impressive! Have you practiced that conversation?  
   - No  
   - Yes

Plan your approach:

5. Wonderful! Based on your goals and needs, your PI's preferences and your understanding of the situation, do you how you'll execute these conversations?  
   - No  
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Survey Says:

1. Good news! You're ready to talk to someone.  
2. …and that someone (probably) isn't your PI (yet).  
3. Who can you talk to in your Community of Magnificent People to reflect and prepare to have a productive conversation with your PI?  

   - A: That's Ok!  
   - B: Totally Normal!  
   - C: Really Common!  
   - D: Happens to Everyone!

---

(Re) Consider your strategy:

7. You amaze! Ok. Have you thought about your best case and worst case scenario about how they will respond?  
   - No  
   - Yes

8. Outstanding. Do you think you can handle the worst case scenario?  
   - No  
   - Yes

9. Very good. Have you considered 1-2 options – in case your PI rejects your request/idea?  
   - No  
   - Yes

   - No  
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AWESOME!!!!!!
You’re ready to talk to your PI!
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**Power Differentials**

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**AWESOME!!!!!!**

You're ready to talk to your PI!

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Who's in my Community of Magnificent People? (COMP) [COMP]ensating for the support you can’t solely get from your PI

Your Research Mentor

Current and past people in the lab

People at other institutions

INDY: INDEPENDENCE
CAS: CAREER EXPLOR.
PEARL: PERSONAL
PETE: PROGRESSION
Who’s in my Community of Magnificent People? (COMP)
[COMP]ensating for the support you can’t solely get from your PI

1. “What kind of support do you offer students/postdocs?”
2. “What level of confidentiality can you have when students/postdocs discuss issues?”

### Questions or Concerns?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career of Professional Development</th>
<th>• Office of Career and Professional Development counselors [career.ucsf.edu]</th>
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<td>Progression &amp; Independence</td>
<td>• Assistant Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars [postdocs.ucsf.edu] postdocs</td>
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<td>• Associate Dean of Graduate Programs [graduate.ucsf.edu/about] students</td>
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<td>• Office of Career and Professional Development [career.ucsf.edu]</td>
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<td>• Dean of Postdoctoral Scholars [OPS] [postdocs.ucsf.edu] postdocs</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>• Care Advocate* [careadvocate.ucsf.edu] – specifically sexual harassment</td>
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<td>• Office of the Ombuds* [ombuds.ucsf.edu]</td>
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<td>• Community Legal Resources [success.ucsf.edu/legal-resources]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• International Students and Scholars Office Advisor [iss.o.ucsf.edu]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &amp; Transgender Resources staff [lgbt.ucsf.edu]</td>
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<td>• First Generation Support Services [Under the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Life] [studentlife.ucsf.edu/about] students</td>
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<td>• Student Veteran and Military Support Services [Under the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Life] [studentlife.ucsf.edu/about] students</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities [studentlife.ucsf.edu/student-conduct-and-discipline] students</td>
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* Denotes no mandated reporting requirements (they are entirely confidential)
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(Comp)ensating for the support you can’t solely get from your PI

Your Research Mentor

Current and past people in the lab

People at your institution

People in your field/in your world

Power Differentials

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1/23/20

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- Next steps in your relationship

How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language
Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

The Conversation

Post Conversation

Start

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Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

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Post Conversation
Let’s play a(n assessment) game: Are You Ready?

Know your PI

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Know Yourself

2. Great! Do you know what you want, need, and is reasonable to ask for from your PI? Yes No

1. Do you know what you want or need? Yes No

Plan your approach

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Your Framework

I want to talk to ___________ about _____________________

INDY: INDEPENDENCE
CAS: CAREER EXPLOR.
PETE: PROGRESSION
PEARL: PERSONAL
### Prepared for Conversation

**I want to talk to ___________ about _____________________**

#### Assess Yourself.
What are your *Interests* (e.g.)
1. Goals
2. Needs
3. Concerns

#### Assess Your Advisor/PI.
What do you think are their *Interests* (e.g.)
1. Goals
2. Needs
3. Concerns

#### Assess Your Approach.
Logistics: (e.g. what is the best way to let them know you want to have this conversation? The best time? The best location, etc.)

#### Assess Your (Overall) Strategy.
Based on your assessment: Should you have this conversation? Are you ready, or is there something you should do, or someone else you should talk to first/instead?

---

**YOUR TURN. Pair up!**

Take 8 minutes and begin writing down your thoughts.

Take another 8 minutes to share your prep.
## Your Framework

**Prep for Conversation**

### I want to talk to ___________ about ___________

### My PI

### Exploring careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assess Yourself.</th>
<th>What are your <strong>Interests</strong> (e.g.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals: Do an internship to explore a career path beyond academe.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs: I need to find out how to do this – find an internship and figure out how to juggle it with my work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns: During my interview I said I was definitely pursuing academe. I don’t know how my PI will respond if I say I want something else. If they will stop investing in me. I’ve heard that can happen.</td>
<td></td>
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<th>What do you think are their <strong>Interests</strong> (e.g.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals: To do work that contributes to the field.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs: They want to use the data from my project as part of their next grant which they plan to submit this year. They need me to finish current project, left unfinished by a previous student.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns: I assume that they are concerned I will get off track, delay progression and they will have to support me longer. They may think exploring careers will distract me from my work.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assess Your Approach.</th>
<th>Logistics: (e.g. what is the best way to let them know you want to have this conversation? The best time? The best location, etc.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>My PI is definitely someone who wants to talk about things quickly and then think about it. They do not seem to like surprises.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An email requesting 30 minutes to talk and saying that I would like to discuss my progress and career path might be a good idea. Then just give an overview, and explain that I would like to engage in career exploration for the next year. Talk about it briefly so I can get their thoughts on it, and then ask to talk with more details again later.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>I need to know more before I have a conversation – there are at least 3 people who have gone in the non-academic career path in my friend’s lab. I should reach out to them first and find out how they did it –how they had the conversation, how they structured their time and maintained their productivity. Is there any data that shows that students who do career exploration aren’t less productive? I need these details before I pitch anything to my PI.</td>
<td></td>
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Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

I want to talk to _______________ about _______________

Assess Yourself.
What are your Interests (e.g.)
1. Goals
2. Needs
3. Concerns

- **Goals**: To identify interesting research that is viable for teaching/research institutions.
- **Needs**: To figure out how to get my PIs to agree to what I can take from my postdoc.
- **Concerns**: I've been trying to have this conversation for the last 3 months. Somehow we never seem to get anywhere. I feel like I'm treading water and I am embarrassed and frustrated.

Assess Your Advisor/PI.
What do you think are their Interests (e.g.)
1. Goals
2. Needs
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- **Goals**: On the website: To do cutting edge research that improves people's lives.
- **Needs**: Honestly, I don't know. That's part of the problem-I can't figure them out. So…to be productive?
- **Concerns**: That I can't get unstuck. I want don’t spend significant time working on something I won’t be allowed to take, but it isn’t clear I can take what I am working on. Also, everything I’ve done to try to get time/attention with them hasn’t resulted in clear direction about what to do next re. independence. Maybe I chose the wrong person/lab? Maybe they are disappointed in me?

Assess Your Approach.
Logistics: (e.g. what is the best way to let them know you want to have this conversation? The best time? The best location, etc.)

- I’m clearer about what hasn’t worked: meeting regularly, telling them that my goal an academic position, meeting with an agenda with ‘independence’ as an ongoing topic. Somehow we’re having lots of conversations, but no progress. I know that 20-minute meetings work best for them. They like me to be brief.

Assess Your (Overall) Strategy.
Based on your assessment: Should you have this conversation? Are you ready, or is there something you should do, or someone else you should talk to first/ instead?

- That isn’t a reasonable question. I have to have a conversation if I’m ever going to get out of here. Obviously people have succeeded in their lab, but no one currently in the lab can give me a straight answer about how to do it. I could try to find someone who left a few years ago. I could look at the types of projects previous postdocs/how faculty worked on to get a sense of the types of projects. I could talk to the postdoc dean. I could take OCPD’s Independence Course to ‘force’ the conversation. I could also check in with my old PhD advisor for advice. Also, I’m really tired/demoralized. I could talk to an FSAP counselor.
Your Turn!

I want to talk to ______________ about ____________________

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What are your Interests (e.g.)
1. Goals
2. Needs
3. Concerns

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You, at the center of your professional universe

Your Research Mentor

Current and past people in the lab

People at your institution

People in your field/in your world
What will you learn today?

- Define what negotiation is and why you will need to negotiate with your research mentor.
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How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language
Your Framework

Prep for Conversation

The Conversation

You Open

You Work
with the ‘Yes’, the ‘No’
and the Fog (the Maybe)

You Close

Set the agenda
(stated your interest)

Summarize
and discuss next steps

Post Conversation
Your Framework

The Conversation

When engaging a supervisor, your open should meet 3 criteria:

1. Be clear and concise.

2. Demonstrate that you are taking responsibility for your interests (goals, needs and concerns).

3. Signal that you value their interests (goals, needs and concerns).

(\textit{this is sometimes criteria #2})

- **You Open**

- Thanks for taking the time to meet. This week, my two agenda items are to update you on my progress and discuss some career development opportunities. Is there anything else you think we should cover? No? Okay.

- To start, In the last week I moved forward on 3 things.
  - First, I analyzed X data and got some interesting results,
  - Second, I began orienting Ursula (the undergraduate student) and,
  - Third, I read up on Y and Z articles that you gave me.
  Unless you think differently, let me start with the data…..

- …(I know my last item was the Carver and Jemison papers, but I see we have 15 minutes left and I want to make sure we discuss career development. Can we move those to our next 1:1 and discuss this instead? …thanks/ok).

- So, career development. My current thinking is the following: I am still interested in an academic career, yet I realize I want to explore career options for PhDs. There is a peer career exploration program, supported by the Grad. Division called MIND, and I would like to apply for next spring’s cohort.

  My goal today is to begin to discuss if there is a way to participate in the program and still meet the goal of potentially contributing my data to X paper, and achieve authorship.

- **CAS: CAREER EXPLORATION**
Your Framework

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INDY: INDEPENDENCE

- I recently learned about Dr. Laurence Clement’s Academic Career Readiness Assessment tool, ACRA.
- As you may know, ACRA was pioneered at UCSF. It’s a rubric designed to help trainees assess and improve their competitiveness for faculty positions. It categorizes the types and level of productivity that were essential to being selected as a candidate, according to the biomedical faculty who sat on tenure track faculty hiring committees.
- I’ve been using it to evaluate my own competitiveness, and have some ideas I would like to discuss with you.
- Based on ACRA, two weaknesses in my candidacy are around articulating a research vision and strategy that is innovative and viable at R/T institutions, and a lack of demonstrated teaching experience. I want to tackle research issue first.
- I know that I will need to hammer out my projects related to X grant. I will do that. But I’ve also generated four potential ideas that build on my research interests in Y, that could be implemented at both a PUI and R/T institutions.
- So I’m asking for two things – 1. can we find about an hour for me to pitch my ideas to you, and 2. would you be willing to review the draft of my ACRA plan and help me determine which activities would best position me?
Your Turn: Try articulating an open

The Conversation

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Your Turn: Try articulating an open

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Set the agenda (stated your interest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You Open</th>
<th>You Work with the ‘Yes’, the ‘No’ and the Fog (the Maybe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You Close</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Yes** *(appreciate & celebrate)*
- **No** *(gather more data)*
- **Fog** *(gather more data, try to make headway to yes)*
Working with the no

They say

Then they say

No

Can you tell me more about what factors influenced your decision?

If you're a human being, you are probably going to want to do one of these.

Don't.

TALK

Defend yourself

Correct their errors

Explain your perspective

Accuse them of unfairness

Go silent

GET OUT

ASK & LISTEN

Inquire

Ask questions. UNDERSTAND THEIR INTEREST

* Unless you feel unsafe or unable. Then do this

* Unless you feel unsafe or unable. Then do this

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If you’re a human being, you are probably going feel some of this.

Try 3 times… Or for 3 months

Ask, inquire, clarify, probe, discuss, confirm, listen.
Working with the fog

Jim Camp: Deplete someone’s budget. (A negotiation tactic)

Your Budget: Time 1x + Money 2x + Energy 3x + Emotion 4x

The sunken cost fallacy: “I’ve given so much and am so close. I can’t give up now.”

Win-Win negotiation is not a universal concept
Working with the no (and the fog): Your Turn

ASK QUESTIONS
1. What’s influencing your thinking?
2. What (other) factors shaped your decision?
3. How did you come to that conclusion?
4. What motivated you to say that?
5. Could you say more about your thinking?
6. Can you share how you’re seeing the situation?
7. When did that become clear to you?
8. What concerns do you have?
9. Could you talk about some examples?
10. What level/type of performance would you need to see?
11. Can you share some examples of that?
12. How would you describe some examples of ‘demonstrating commitment’? (or whatever value ‘taking initiative’, etc.)
13. How could I have handled this differently?

USE ACTIVE LISTENING
1. I see. Go on.
2. That sounds difficult
3. That’s unfortunate to hear.
4. I can see how someone would be disappointed by that.
5. It sounds like you’re saying…(summarize their point) Is that right?

Signal that you value their interests
• DON’T SETTLE FOR THEIR POSITION (students can’t do internships)
• UNCOVER THEIR INTEREST (I’m concerned that if a student does an internship they won’t be productive and then will leave, making them a drag on my productivity)

• Don’t use ‘why’ – why makes people defensive. “Why did you do that?”
• Instead, use “how, what, when” etc,
• Whenever possible – deflect and gather more data.

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Who’s in my Community of Magnificent People? (COMP)
[COMP]ensating for the support you can’t solely get from your

- You, at the center of your professional universe
- Your Research Mentor
- Current and past people in the lab
- People at your institution
- People in your field/in your world
Your Turn: Try articulating an open

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Set the agenda (stated your interest)

• Yes (appreciate & celebrate)
• No (gather more data)
• Fog (gather more data, try to make headway to yes)

You Work with the ‘Yes’, the ‘No’ and the Fog (the Maybe)

Summarize and discuss next steps

• Thank you for meeting with me. It was productive.
• Based on our conversation, I will…
• To recap we will…
• I see. Thank you to taking the time to explain.
• Thank you for hearing me out.
• You’ve given me a lot to think about.
• My goal is to meet your expectations.
• I will take the time to consider what we talked about today.
• I am willing to do the work.
• I believe in the work.
• Can we meet again later to discuss?

Your Turn – Practice Your Close!
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Yes
(appreciate & celebrate)

No
(gather more data)

Fog
(gather more data,
try to make headway to yes)

You Close

Post Conversation

Summarize and discuss next steps

Cycle up and do it again!

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A supervisor’s goal is to keep everyone on track

Your negotiation journey begins (or continues)!

This is the experience of managing a professional relationship
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How to Have a Career Conversation with Your Thesis Advisor or PI: Strategy & Language
Naledi Saul, Director

You can do this!