Shaping an academic career

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2 themes:

Serendipity

Enjoying the journey
My career

Definitely not a straight line

Maybe a maze?

Or a walking meditation?
The straight line version

• 10 years learning medicine/ general practice
• 10 years learning medical education
• 10 years learning research
• Professor of eHealth and Primary Care, Head of Research Department at UCL.
The maze version

- Where am I?
- What am I doing?
- Where am I going?
- Why?
What actually happened (serendipity)

- Pre-clinical and M.Sc at Oxford
- Clinical at The London (now QMUL)
- Determined on a career in reproductive endocrinology
- Offered a PhD at Oxford (after house jobs / SHO)
- Funding fell through while I was in Australia
- Back in the UK with no money, no job, and nowhere to live
- Met a friend in the pub who offered me a locum GP job starting the next day.
More serendipity (right place, right time)

- Loved General Practice; embarked on GP training
- My proposed trainer left, so I had to find a new training practice at very short notice
- Kentish Town Health Centre were looking
- Completed GP training
- Offered a job as a lecturer at UCL, teaching internal medicine to medical students
- RCGP Junior Training Fellowship
- GP Partnership

• Established teaching of general internal medicine in general practice
• Grew the GP-based teaching from 2% to 18% of the curriculum (medicine, COOP, O&G, Paeds, Psych)
• Undertook a PhD in Medical Education
• Became Director of Undergraduate Medical Education for Primary Care at UCL
• Some Health Services Research
• Job share partner and principal in General Practice
More serendipity

- Harkness Fellowship 2001 – 2002
- A year at UCSF, studying the effect of the Internet on the doctor – patient relationship
- Career Scientist Award 2002 – 2007
- Established the UCL eHealth Unit in 2003.
- Gave up my partnership in 2007
- Still see patients as a salaried GP
Enjoy the journey

No pot of gold …

No arrival point
So what have I learnt?

• It’s very hard to predict the future
• So take advantage of what comes
• Make the most of opportunities
• Enjoy what you do, and do what you enjoy
• Be prepared to take risks
• Keep your integrity
• Life is about much more than a career, but work you enjoy is a huge privilege.
Questions?