

My Personal Research Ethics: Be Honest, Be Patient, and Don't be Afraid of Failure

My personal research ethics can be summarized by three basic principles: 1) be honest, 2) be patient, and 3) don't be afraid of failure. These three straightforward points are described in more detail below. It is important for me to keep my research ethics uncomplicated, almost like a mantra, which I can easily remember (akin to a bumper sticker).

- 1) **Be Honest-** It seems pretty obvious, but by simply being honest, I really believe that I will avoid unethical research behavior. Lying about research outcomes, authorship, data results, originality of ideas, etc., can all be evaded by asking myself: "am I lying?" No matter how badly I want my research to work, if I have to lie to achieve some desired outcome, I will not do it. If I remain honest and always pursue truthful behavior, I am confident that I will avoid unethical research practices.
- 2) **Be Patient-** Research is often a time consuming endeavor, and typically, significant results do not occur overnight. Technological advancement is an incremental process, which must be achieved through time and hard work. To be a successful and ethical researcher, I need to remain patient with my work, regardless of outside influence and my drive to succeed. By remaining patient, I think my motivation towards unethical behavior will be thwarted.
- 3) **Don't be Afraid of Failure-** Since research is, by its very essence, concerned with discovering the unknown, it is likely that I will experience failure. If the solution were already known, then the project becomes a design issue, and is no longer research. Failure is an inevitably part of research: dissertation topics get snatched up, grants proposals get rejected, publications get denied, partnerships fall through, interest wanes, and research often becomes obsolete. In order to avoid the temptation towards unethical research (e.g., presenting fraudulent data to get a publication), I need to remind myself that failure is part of the research process.

I am confident that following these three rules will keep me from pursuing unethical research, which will only cheat the research community and myself. In terms of research, the age-old adage "nothing in life worth having comes easy" is particularly true, and when the going gets tough, I need to repeat this mantra.