By knowing what your needs are and by recognizing that needs (just like plant pathogens) evolve, you realize that you’ll require different tools, tactics, and strategies for managing your career and your life.

- **Emotional Support**: Transitioning from being a student to having a career is tough; transitioning through your career is tough; life is tough. Even retirement is tough (or so we’ve seen!). Colleagues and friends both in and out of work are important relationships to develop and an antidote to the stresses we all face in this 24/7/365 world.

- **Project Evaluation**: Some needs are very specific and time dependent, like evaluating grant proposals, submitting a manuscript, and developing a course, and having a sounding board (to encourage good ideas and prevent bad decisions) is helpful. Having a network of people to help you on this provides more than one perspective, and if nothing else, a second set of eyes.

- **Accountability**: There is important and urgent. Prioritizing is one of the most difficult tasks we have as humans because there are always conflicting priorities. Developing a system with independent evaluators throughout your career is much better than finding out once per year, or at your tenure-review, that your priorities were not their priorities.

- **Self Care**: Yes, you read that right. Most people don’t acknowledge this need, but ancient Romans realized long ago that a healthy mind needs a healthy body. Recent research supports this. Take time to take care of yourself—whether it is a walk or a run; time in the gym, yoga studio, or golf course; arts and crafts, or even a trashy novel to rest your brain. And don’t forget to schedule that doctor or dentist appointment you’ve been putting off! Of all the categories, taking care of the self (mentally, physically, and emotionally) is often overlooked and can lead to breakdowns in all other areas.

Identifying the need(s) is hard—and most people are surprised by their list. Recognize that everyone—everyone—has needs, but that not everyone has the self-awareness to recognize what these needs are or that needs change over time. As such, it is impossible for you (or any one person) to meet all of your needs. Just as we know there are no silver bullets in plant pathology, it is equally unrealistic to expect someone else (including you!) to meet all your needs for you. But, by knowing what your needs are and by recognizing that needs (just like plant pathogens) evolve, you realize that you’ll require different tools, tactics, and strategies for managing your career and your life. And in the end, you’ll find the best mentor of all—yourself. And, hopefully, a few friends or colleagues along the way.