

# Surviving Difficult ~~Events~~ <sup>Situations</sup>

## & Minimizing Their Impact to Your Career

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**Computational Physics & Methods (CCS-2)**







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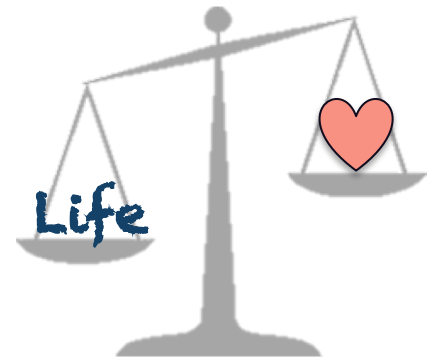
# Career: Mid-Career Scientist

DOE Nat'l Lab	LLNL	ORNL		LANL
Apps HPC	 Low-Energy Nuclear Physics	Large-scale multi- physics applications		Bleeding-Edge Computing Research
Top 10 Systems	 #1, 2009	 #1, 2012		 #6, 2015
PI	SciDAC Co-PI Scientific Discovery through Advanced Computing	INCITE Co-PI Innovative and Novel Computational Impact on Theory and Experiment		Exascale Computing Project
Volunteer	Co-founder/Co-lead/Mentor ISTI Parallel Computing Summer Research Internship			Reviewer Journals, conferences, DOE, LANL LDRD
	Physics - Solving the mysteries of the unknown – Bringing order and balance – Being in awe with life			
Other	Mother (17-yr, 6-yr girls!)	Wife of a Work-passionate Scientist	Chef Housekeeper Chauffeur	Therapist Party Planner Work-life coach
				College Counselor Entertainment Dr. Fixer



# Difficult ~~Events~~ *situations*

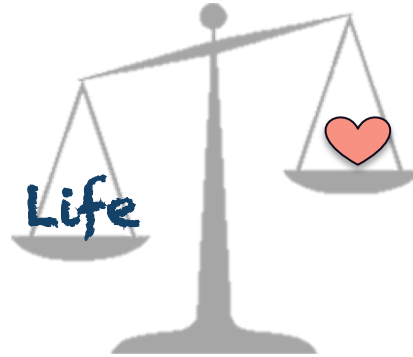
- Reality
  - You will have difficult life events (death, divorce, marriage, pregnancy, finances, personal injury, etc.)
  - You will have difficult career/work events (changing location, change focus, harassment, discrimination, promotion, burn-out, etc.)
- Single acute life events are institutionally & culturally protected
- Your career path is most at risk when difficult events are:
  - multi-variate (kids, family, environment, culture),
  - numerous (too many at one time),
  - seemingly unending (chronic suffering),
  - frequent (no time to recover between events).
- And options appear limited
  - Limited funding, support, experience



# My big derailment – Graduate School

- Unwise choices converge to create multi-variate, numerous, chronic, frequent difficult events

- Husband
- Aging & Ill Father in CA



- Options appear limited
  - No money
  - No social support

- Exhausted
  - General qualifiers & special qualifiers over Christmas!
  - C in Quantum Mechanics?

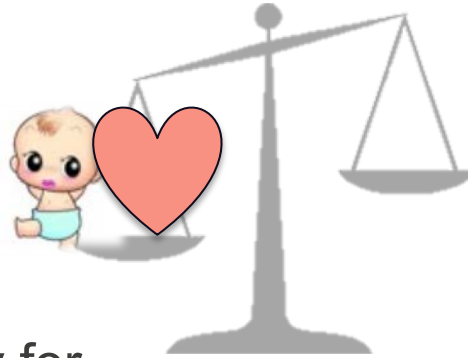
**Outcome: A summer hiatus in CA**

# I chose to reset the story

- Unwise choices converge to create multi-variate, numerous, chronic, frequent difficult events

- Husband ~~XXXX~~

- Aging & Ill ~~XXXX~~ Father in CA




- Research, identify & apply for many options
  - Figure it out

- An MS in Physics?
  - Internet Start-Up
  - Administrative Asst.
  - Director of Communications
  - Web-hosting, e-commerce Start-Ups
  - High School Math Teacher

**Outcome: Return to graduate school as a single parent!**

# What would I do differently knowing what I know now?

- Keep the scales from tipping over by:
  - Protect the work  that makes me happy and the career that enables me to do it
  - A difficult situation can be less difficult with the right perspective
    - I should versus I want to
- Expand my view of available options beyond flight
  - Stable finances - money can help
  - Ask for help – mentors, managers, flexible work
  - Research and apply for other opportunities, slow it down
- This is a perfectly valid career path

