

## To do a PhD or not to do a PhD?

Embarking on the journey to obtaining the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is not for the faint hearted nor the meek and mild. It can be a lonesome journey testing your endurance and tenacity often as much as your academic prowess as you travel through an emotional roller coaster that will test your enthusiasm and frustrations, leave you with a sense of isolation and boredom, and the feeling that you just want to get the job done. As an analogy, think of your Diploma or Degree as a walk over the undulating and sometimes challenging hills of the South Downs; your Masters degree as a steep climb up to the top of Mount Snowden and finally your PhD is the long and arduous trek up to the summit of Mount Everest. Time management, planning, managing your personal and work relationships, and commitment are key ingredients to success

You're up for the challenge .... but success is not guaranteed The following reasons have been given for not getting a PhD;

- Not wanting a PhD (I like the sound of being called Dr.)
- Underestimating what is required
- Losing contact with your supervisor (you have to develop and then manage the relationship)
- Not having a 'thesis' (i.e. position, argument) to maintain

So why bother at all? If it sounds terribly difficult then that is because it is! But the rewards are well worth the effort. Obtaining a PhD is, amongst others;

- A major personal achievement
- Awarded by your peers – you become the member of an elite club
- Career enhancing
- A contribution to new knowledge
- Academically acknowledged research degree
- A balance of the theoretical and practical application which alone stands you out from the crowd
- The conclusion of a long journey; and very often the beginning of a new one

To do a PhD or not to do a PhD is the question and there are many answers. The most important point is if you decide to undertake the long journey, do so for the right reasons. It will be a selfish uncompromising journey with no guarantee of success, but if it comes, success is sweet and rewarding on many levels.... And you get to wear a 'floppy hat'!

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