

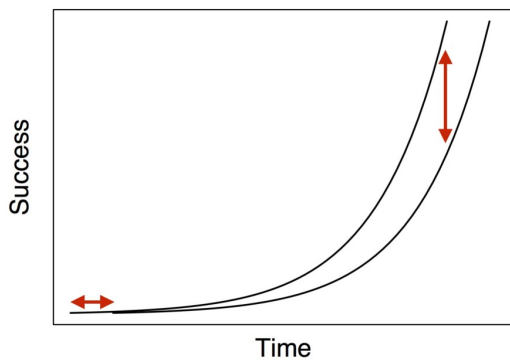
TheTrophicLink

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When should I start giving?

Give and Take, Why helping others drives our success, by Adam Grant... what a great read. It explains that givers are often the most successful people around, and why. It can also be interpreted as a manifesto for change: I already helped people that I might not have before reading it.

But when should one start being a giver, or give giving more time? Is it better to be a matcher (or taker) early in one's career, then gradually put more resources into giving? Clearly one must perform well early on, and recognise and tend to important short term goals (publishing your first few papers, writing your thesis). On the other hand, I suspect important short term goals will always exist. And perhaps more importantly, giving is probably akin to investing in a pension. Early investments are more important than later ones, due to the way interest builds on interest. If the benefits of giving have properties of geometric growth, its never too early to start.



Graph: Two exponential growth curves with the same rate of growth, but one starting a little later than the other. The effects of this delay just grow and grow.

That said, I'd never advise a PhD student (or postdoc) to compromise publishing a paper. But also I'd be surprised if there wasn't time for a little smart giving, to get that investment started.

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