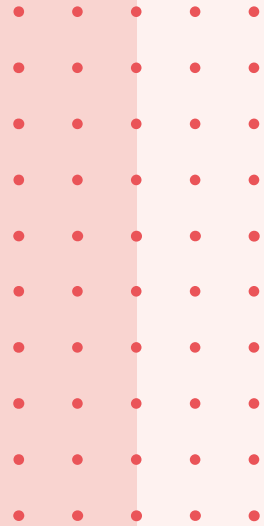


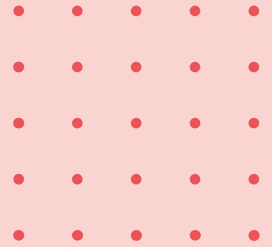
# Choose your own adventure

Values-oriented career paths for  
astronomy grad students

Adapted from Walkowicz 2018



# Life is unpredictable, be fulfilled now



## **success**

Typically defined by external measures/opinions, usually refers to an end goal

## **fulfillment**

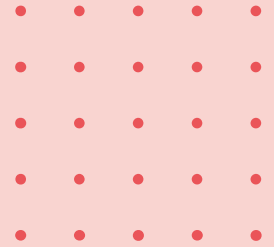
Defined by **you**, refers to the path you are currently on



**“Fulfillment stems from  
aligning your career path  
with your personal values”**

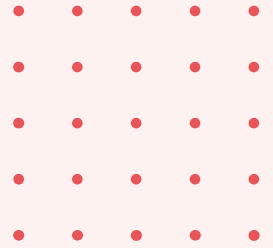


# Aligning your path with your values

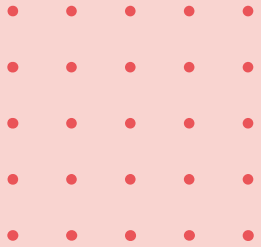


- 1.** Identify your personal values and articulate them via a **mission statement**
- 2.** Make **conscious choices** during grad school (based on your values and mission)
- 3.** In your eventual job search—apply for jobs and/or pursue opportunities that **fit within your values framework**
- 4.** Check in with yourself over time and measure your progress **in terms of your values**

# Things to ask yourself when writing a mission statement



1. What do you think you're good at?
2. What do you really enjoy doing?
3. When was the last time you felt “good-tired” and not just “tired-tired”?
4. What do you want to be “known for”? Not just after your death but during your life.



# Example 1

## Mission statement

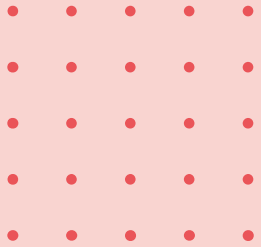
I want to explore the Universe through research and inspire students through education. I enjoy writing, teaching, setting my own schedule, and mentoring.

I am happy to move around to different places and let my career guide those moves, to an extent.

## Potential path

Academia (postdoc → professor route)





## Example 2

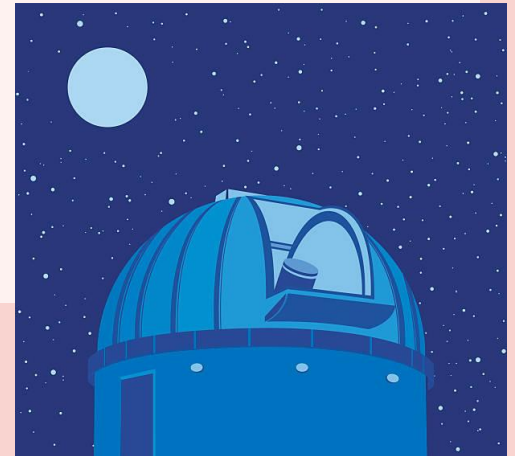
### Mission statement

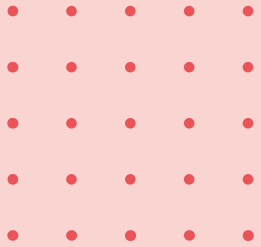
I want to stay in research, and/or broaden the impact of science by improving methods and technologies. I am passionate about astronomy but enjoy the technical, observational, or applied aspects most.

### Potential path

#### Observatory or research scientist

- NRAO
- AURA
- NASA
- STScI
- ESA





## Example 3

### Mission statement

A career in science isn't the "end all be all" for me, I just need stable income to facilitate my lifestyle.

I enjoy working with other people and want a stable job where I can utilize my skills and maybe even work remotely.

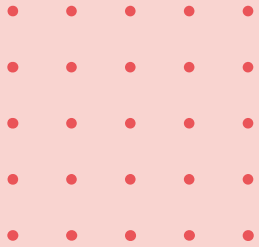
### Potential paths

Data/tech jobs at smaller companies

Research analysts, quantitative analysts, consultants etc







## Example 4

## Mission statement

I want to make money and I don't care what moral ground I have to sacrifice to do it.

### Principal Space Lasers Engineer (Starlink)

SpaceX 3.6 ★

Redmond, WA 98052(SE Redmond area)

- Laser communication is a highly valuable technology due to the high data bandwidth and high spatial efficiency, which requires engineering precise an high...

30+ days ago · More...

## Potential paths

### Entry-Level Operations Research Simulation Developer I

Raytheon Missiles & Defense 3.6 ★

Washington, DC 20011(Catholic University-Brookland area) +11 locations

🏢 Full-time

- You will participate in the design, deve digital simulation software in advance and...

22 days ago

### Space Staff Systems Engineer

Northrop Grumman 4.0 ★

Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

💰 \$149,000 - \$223,400 a year

- Shift: 1st Shift (United States of America).
- Travel Required: Yes, 10% of the Time.
- The Payload and Ground Systems organization within the Northrop

### Fixed Income Strats – AMD Engineering

Goldman Sachs 4.0 ★

New York, NY 10282(Battery Park area)

🏢 Full-time

- The Asset Management Division is comprised of Merchant Banking and Asset Management.
- These businesses engage with clients around the world including sovereign...

30+ days ago · More...



# Choose your own adventure!

Take some time to identify your values. Consider what your own limitations and boundaries are in pursuing certain paths.

Your values and needs will change throughout your life. Reflect often and adjust accordingly.

Don't wait for some external measure of success to make you happy. Take care of yourself and do what fulfills you **now**.