

Ten commandments for a PhD student (aspiring researcher)

1. always remember that you are an aspiring researcher, and that you still have things to learn about your (possible) future job;
2. get excited by your topic; if you are not, you might consider doing some other job;
3. advertise your work, and communicate with other researchers; even if you haven't done anything (yet), you should be able to explain, to various levels of audiences, what you are trying to do; also, if you can teach what you think you know, you will know it better;
4. however... be modest, and do not speak of a subject if you do not know it;
5. attend various talks, in particular from other disciplines, to get experience with judging talks, to see what works and what doesn't, and to get some perspective on your work; stay interested in other fields, and do not isolate yourself in your confined thesis topic;
6. try to check everything; do not take what others say/write at face-value; go to the sources, do not base your work on second-hand literature;
7. be honest, do not claim to have done something if you have not; do not cite something without having seen it (and check your citations and references!);
8. be independent and open-minded; learn to do bibliographic research, and do not read only what your adviser gives you to read;
9. try to publish your work, and avoid doing work that doesn't get published;
10. encourage others to become aspiring researchers!