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 be honest, do not claim to have done something if you have not; do not cite something without having seen it (and check your citations and references!);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!

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