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naturejobs

Reality check

Sifting through feedback detailing the work experiences of *Naturejobs* readers, I was reminded of the chorus to a relatively obscure Lou Reed song that goes: "What's good? Not much at all". Most correspondents were complaining about poor supervision for students and postdocs, noting that the broadly positive sentiments expressed by the writers of our Graduate Journals, and in other articles, failed to resonate with them.

One writer said that there are "many more graduate-student horror stories for every rare and unusual experience" reported in our Graduate Journals. Another wrote that his experience failed to square with what he called our "rose-coloured" view, adding that "erratic supervision and an experimental design that has only recently revealed its considerable weaknesses have left my fascination with science exhausted". Still another said that many institutions and supervisors are chronically lacking at providing postgrads with guidance, and accuses *Naturejobs* of saying students should just grin and bear it, and "help each other out to get through it".

The level of vitriol in some of these responses tells me

that these people are frustrated by the lack of control that they have over their destinies. But although I agree with punk-rock legend John Lydon that "Anger is an energy", I'd add that these disgruntled readers should also listen to the Eric Clapton refrain: "It's in the way that you use it".

On that note, another writer pointed out that rather than complaining or expecting organizations to bail you out, you should be "proactive by taking steps to improve your own situation".

That sentiment has been the goal of *Naturejobs* from the start. We aim to give solutions and offer advice rather than wallowing in a culture of complaint. In essence, we're heeding the words of English rapper The Streets and focusing on "just trying to stay positive".



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