Undoubtedly, at some point early in your career, you will receive advice from those who have been there before. Often this advice can be helpful—in my mind, it is important to balance your ability to network and communicate with others, advance your responsibilities, and focus on self-preservation and personal satisfaction. Some specific things I have learned over the years:

Meet people—sounds cliché, but many opportunities will come up through networking. Every job I have had can be attributed at least partially to someone helping me: classmate, department head/instructor, alumnus of my university, people met in past interviews, and mutual connections.

Attend professional meetings—great for networking, gaining new ideas and perspectives, meeting up with old friends, fostering collaboration, and seeing new places. You might learn more having dinner or drinks with colleagues at a meeting like this than you would a month in your office. Consider posters over presentations, especially if the meeting has short talks. Presentations seem to have more prestige, but a poster allows you to interact with people interested in the subject without being rushed on to the next talk.

Be strategic with what you put on social media—employers do check social media of potential employees. I luckily went to college in an era immediately prior to Facebook and have albums full of pictures that are privately stored in my closet rather than publicly on the web. However, lots of people now talk about the idea of “branding” yourself, an idea that is foreign to people my age and older, but I think for younger generations, this is increasingly important.

Dress the part—how you dress and present yourself has a lot to do with first impressions, subjectively. When you are fresh out of college, you probably look it. My first job out of school was an agricultural manufacturing sales job, and when I grew a beard, I was treated like I was 10 years older. Applicable to both men and women, dress appropriately for the occasion. If on a field or farm visit, wear clothes and footwear that you expect to get dirty. If a professional dinner or meeting, wear clothes that you expect to keep clean. Remember that it is much easier to dress down than to dress up.

Do your homework—whether for a job interview or in a staff meeting, if you have background on the company or people you’re meeting with, it will get you a step up.

Invest early—start a Roth IRA, and put money in it. Even the smallest amount helps get you in the habit of investing, and you will thank yourself years later. If you can retire early, you have more flexibility to pursue your passions.

Get feedback—your annual reviews with supervisors, meetings with mentors, etc. are meant to assess your work, but they are also the best chance you have to receive honest feedback on your performance.