

Foreword to the First Edition

It is hard to believe that we are now already producing the fourth edition within such a brief time period of only five years. In this edition we have once again increased its dimensions; here, however, the basics have remained more or less unchanged, although the number of “specialties” covered continues to increase. This time, for instance, minisequencing, pyrosequencing, and RNA-interference have been included. In addition, the time has now come to write a short introduction concerning the planning of careers for younger researchers—after all, one does not live from the nobility of research alone. Numerous, minute corrections have had to be performed as well, since nothing is perfect. This book as well, in spite of the enormous amount of work which has already been carried out in its production, nevertheless continues to demonstrate room for improvement. One can do whatever is possible, but entropy always seems to win in the end! However, there are enough typographical errors still to be found here as well and we are therefore thankful for every piece of advice which we might receive!

Foreword to the First Edition

Do you actually want to read a foreword?

Read the preface and concluding comments in Hubert Rehms' "Experimentator: Proteinbiochemie" ("Protein Biochemistry" in the "Experimentator" series from Spektrum Verlag) and, finally, after getting a taste for them, read those statements in Siegfried Bars' "Forschen auf Deutsch: Der Machiavelli für Forscher—und solche, die es werden wollen" ("How to Do Research in German: The Machiavellian Guideline for Researchers—and for Those Who Would Like to Become Such" from Verlag Harri Deutsch). Even if the beginner is not inclined to believe so, the wind actually blows as has been described here. The most successful researcher, namely, is not to be distinguished by any pioneering accomplishments, but rather through his/her clever actions in scenes involving publications and in his/her large number of friends. The goal is to keep the phase as short as possible between one's time as a student and that during which one is authorized to function as a professor. Once one has finally reached this goal, however, the research is then left to the others; in the same way in which a successful military strategist no longer reaches for his/her own saber, but instead only carries out his/her advances theoretically through the actions of ambitious military leaders. At this stage, one merely has an indirect relationship to research. Should you not have given up after completing this reading material, you may possibly demonstrate the necessary composure to dedicate yourself to research in molecular biology. This composure, namely, will prove to be quite essential in order to avoid being driven crazy from the endless series of failures which can be expected in the daily life which is to be experienced in the laboratory.

"Don't let yourself be discouraged [...]! The others are also working themselves to a frazzle without any success; it is quite normal that no results are to be observed in the beginning. Just keep it up!—Or take up a reasonable occupation."

With this in regard ...
Cornel Mülhardt