Should I get a PhD and if so, is a Post-Doc Warranted?

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Graduate Student Symposium
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Iowa State University
To Get a Ph.D. or not.....That is the question!
Reasons to **NOT** pursue a Ph.D.

- I can’t find a job
- My girlfriend/boyfriend will be in school for several more years
- I like living in a university community
- I don’t want to make a decision on a career
- I enjoy the life of being a student
- It will allow me to make a lot of money in academia (or business)
- I want to coach the livestock judging team
Reasons to Pursue a Ph.D.

• I love science and to think logically
• I like research and unlocking biological secrets
• The career I want to pursue requires a Ph.D.
• I have an opportunity to work in a quality program
• This provide me with the right training for a career and to become an independent thinker
Is a Post-Doc Warranted?
Objectives of Post-Doctoral training

• Faculty development program
  – Help develop critical thinking skills
  – Develop individual into an independent researcher
  – Hone grant writing skills
• Expand depth of training
• Shortened time in Ph.D. programs today doesn’t allow for students to mature into independent researchers in Ph.D. programs
Should I do a Post-Doc?

• When advisable
  – Planning on a research career
    • Must be able to support my program within a few years
  – Is mentoring provided?
  – Will I have opportunities to broaden myself?
  – Will I have opportunities to write grant proposals?
  – I will be joining a quality program
  – Go to a different school
  – Stretch yourself by going into a different field
  – Other candidates for the position I would likely have post-doc experience
Should I do a Post-Doc?

• When not advisable or necessary
  – Career choice of industry, teaching or extension
  – Not in a well-respected program
  – Will not have a documented outcome or achievement
  – Too many years of post-doc can be a negative