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Reflections on Paths Taken

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There is no dearth of issues confronting us as a nation and as a world. There is a wellspring of big ideas to move the needle to address these issues and effect positive change. Such ideas can have roots in science and technology. They can be guided by an ethical framework that values integrity, autonomy, responsibility and openness. How do we as scientists and engineers put ideas into action? Can we row together towards common, large objectives? How do we get others to join us? Can our small motions become a movement? How does the specter of success, and how does our ethical framework, influence our actions? I will illustrate my take on the path from awareness to action to assessment using examples from my decade as a university president and my recent tenure as a leader of NSF.