As a PhD student, I've reached a point where my multi-year project must be discontinued because the methodology isn't effective. The prospect of starting a new project is daunting. I'm left wondering if the past several years have been wasted, and whether I will find success in this new endeavor.

What should I do?

Consider the potential value of publishing your negative results. Demonstrating that a method is inapplicable can be a significant contribution to the research community. It's worthwhile to explore the possibility of getting your findings published.

You should engage not only with your PI but also with other faculty members in your institution or researchers in the same field from different institutions. They might offer diverse opinions or ideas that haven't occurred to you.

You should consider being open to acquiring new skills or enrolling in courses if necessary. View this as a valuable investment in your future. By dedicating hard work to your new project, you can anticipate a rewarding outcome. Have confidence in your ability to face and conquer these challenges.

Resources: https://www.science.org/content/article/scientific-swerve-changing-your-research-focus