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Megan W. Gerhardt and Joy V. Peluchette

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# A Conversation With Ray Aldag and Belle Rose Ragins: The 2013 Midwest Scholars of the Midwest Academy of Management

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Megan W. Gerhardt<sup>1</sup> and Joy V. Peluchette<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

As editors of this special issue, we strive to showcase interesting and timely scholarship that focuses on current topics in management, as well as seek ways to continue to strengthen the connection between *JLOS* and the Midwest Academy of Management. In this vein, we are proud to feature this conversation with Drs. Ray Aldag and Belle Rose Ragins, the 2013 Midwest Scholars. They discuss their reactions to what we view as critical, timely challenges in the field of management and provide developmental advice for students and junior faculty.

## Keywords

management, organizational behavior, leadership

## Introduction

Each year, the theme of our Midwest Academy of Management Special Issue focuses on “Current Issues in Management”—a theme that is intentionally broad, subjective, and evolving. As editors of this special issue, we strive to produce an issue that showcases interesting, timely scholarship in keeping with this theme. In addition, we have increased our efforts to strengthen the meaningful connections between the *JLOS* special issue and the Midwest Academy of Management.

In this vein, we are proud to feature this conversation with Drs. Ray Aldag and Belle Rose Ragins, the 2013 Midwest Scholars. The 2013 Midwest Academy of Management conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was the inaugural year of the Midwest Scholars program, established to honor exemplary achievements and recognition in the field of management scholarship. Dr. Ray Aldag currently holds the Glen A. Skillrud Family Chair in Business at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Dr. Belle Rose Ragins is currently a professor of human resource management at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In addition to sharing their experiences and insights with attendees at the Midwest annual meeting, we asked these current Midwest Scholars to discuss their reactions to what we view as critical, timely challenges in our field. In addition to asking what they view as the most interesting current issues in management, we also asked Drs. Ragins and Aldag to weigh in on the ongoing “rigor versus relevance” debate, provide developmental advice for students and junior

faculty, reflect on what they see as the most significant developments to date, and discuss what they view as future challenges ahead.

1. **The Midwest Academy of Management publishes an annual special issue of *JLOS* with the broad theme “Current Issues in Management.” In your view, what are the most salient current issues in need of attention? What conversations should we be having?**

## Ray Aldag:

There are many specific topics that I think deserve more attention. These include, for instance, approaches to enhancing minority influence in group decision making; the potential impact of computerized decision support systems; the power of storytelling, metaphors, and analogies; the roles of heuristics in negotiations; the challenges of virtual organizations; and the promise of internal prediction markets. Also, there is growing evidence that findings from what Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) have termed *WEIRD* (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) samples—that is, almost all of our findings—are not

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universal. As such, more research in non-WEIRD settings is important. I'd also like to address some broader issues:

*Emphasizing the importance of research integrity.* In my view, the entire research endeavor is under attack. We see, for instance, article titles such as "Why Most Published Research Findings are False," "Scandalous Science: Research Fraud and Dubious Data in Journals," "Fraud Case Seen as a Red Flag for Psychology Research," and "False-Positive Psychology: Undisclosed Flexibility in Data Collection and Analysis Allows Presenting Anything as Significant." In recent years, much of the work by former Tilburg University professor Diederik Stapel, former Harvard University professor Marc Hauser, and Ulrich Lichtenthaler, the former chair of management and organization at the University of Mannheim, has been shown to be fraudulent, leading to many retractions of published articles.

*Recognizing the consequences of our desire for socially acceptable results.* When we see findings that support our views, or our hopes, for a just world, we are less likely to challenge them. For instance, the Dutch psychologist Diederick Stapel (noted above), one of the most prolific and widely cited scholars in Europe, regularly reported findings that the audiences "wanted to hear" relating to discrimination, the effect of a trash-filled environment on racism, the impact of meat eating on selfishness, and how a male versus female voice caused job applicants to be seen as more competent; at least 55 of his publications were somehow fraudulent. Conversely, we have an almost visceral aversion to research on certain topics, as well as to findings, that contradict our state of knowledge or cherished stories. For example, Strube (2005) demonstrated serious flaws in Triplett's early work on social facilitation (often called the first experiment in social psychology), but his work has been virtually ignored.

*Resisting "truthiness."* Following from the above, Stephen Colbert's word, *truthiness*, was a recent word of the year for both the American Dialect Society and Merriam-Webster. *Truthiness* is defined as "truth that comes from the gut, not books," and "the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true." I hope we can resist truthiness.

*Encouraging systematic search for disconfirmation.* I am very concerned that our scholarly endeavors are being contaminated by confirmation bias, selective exposure, subjective perception, and enclave deliberation. I think it is critical, following Platt's (1964) admonitions, to begin to systematically look for ways to disconfirm extant theories. Both Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein proposed specific tests that could be used to disprove their theories. How often do we see such proposed suggestions for disconfirmation in the management literature?

*Better understanding the power—and danger—of fads and pseudoscience.* Fads and pseudoscience have

remarkable appeal and seem to resist extinction despite all contrary evidence. Pigliucci and Boudry (2013) have written that

pseudoscience is not—contrary to popular belief—merely a harmless pastime of the gullible; it often threatens people's welfare, sometimes fatally so. For instance, millions of people worldwide have died of AIDS because they (or, in some cases, their governments) refuse to accept basic scientific findings about the disease, entrusting their fates to folk remedies and "snake oil" therapies.

There is increasing evidence that simply informing people about things such as the minimal dangers of vaccinations and the low risk of sniper attacks only increases their concerns about such outcomes; probability neglect causes us to focus on the negative outcomes to which our attention has been drawn. More broadly, how can we capture the power of fads and pseudoscience to enhance the impact of legitimate scholarship?

#### **Belle Rose Ragins:**

There are a number of issues that call for our attention, but let me discuss two key issues here that are near and dear to my heart.

*Workforce demographics.* We've witnessed seismic demographic changes in the United States. For example, people of color are now 37% of the population, and racial and ethnic minorities constitute the majority of children under five (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a). The Census Bureau estimates that people of color will constitute more than half of the population by 2043, and that Hispanic and Asian populations will more than double by that time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). When we add gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, religion, age, and disability to this mix, we are witness to unprecedented diversity in our workforce. Despite these changes, we also witness nearly impenetrable glass ceilings and walls that will reflect a new apartheid if they are not dismantled. Looking to the future, bilingual skills will move from an asset to a norm. The disability rights movement will take new forms as young workers with autism spectrum disorder enter the workforce. As the middle class disappears, class differences in our population will continue to stratify the population and workplace. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees are out of the closet, and social contact is changing America's attitudes toward gays and lesbians in nearly unprecedented ways. It is just a matter of time until the United States joins other nations in recognizing gay marriage and passing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

So what does this mean for the field of management? To start, our workplaces are more diverse now than any time in history. Historically, diversity brings out the best and the worst in human behavior. It can lead to personal growth, creativity, and learning, but it can also raise the potential for

group threat, fear, and backlash. Managers will have to grapple with overt and covert forms of discrimination in the workplace. They need to understand how and why people react to threat, and the subtle and often subconscious ways in which stereotypes seep into workplace relationships and employment decisions. They need to recognize hidden biases in themselves and others, and the ways in which threat, fear, and stereotypes can manifest at work. They need to understand the constructs of class, power, and privilege, and realize that people do not leave their experiences and identities at the workplace door. They will need to recognize the symbolic nature of prejudice. Nooses and swastikas in the locker room are not just pranks or displays of insensitivity, they are symbols that reflect a historical legacy of pain, intimidation, and cruelty that can strike to the core. Managers need to understand the historical legacy of discrimination. We need to educate ourselves, as we are not taught this history. We need to have the difficult conversations about diversity. This dialogue is critical for our future as management scholars, educators, and residents in global and increasingly diverse communities.

As management scholars and educators, are we preparing our students for the challenges inherent in a diverse workforce? Are we giving them the information and skills needed to deal with racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, and other forms of prejudice at work? Our students won't be able to create inclusive workplaces until they themselves understand the social psychology of prejudice, how people react to differences, and the fundamental ways in which stereotypes and expectations shape perceptions of others at work. They can't help others until they are aware of their own hidden biases. Are we helping our students recognize, understand, and address their hidden and subconscious biases? Following this logic, we can't help our students do this diversity work until we do it ourselves. Are we having the needed conversations about the meaning of diversity in our lives and workplaces?

*The space between work and nonwork domains.* The work-life literature has conceptualized life primarily in terms of family. Although family is an important part of life, life involves more than just family. People encounter a variety of nonwork experiences that change them, and these changes are brought into the workplace in complex and often unacknowledged ways. We are just beginning to understand the full extent of life spillovers. We need to have conversations about the spillover of life experiences to the workplace.

We live in times of turmoil. Our lives are riddled with environmental and economic uncertainty. Despite our best efforts, fears of terrorism, mass shootings, and weapons of mass destruction can permeate our psyches. These fears burrow deep. We need to understand the ways in which these experiences are brought into the workplace, and offer programs and support that help workers address these life

challenges. This goes well beyond the idea of work-family. This is work-LIFE. The shock of a gunman massacring 20 children in an elementary school in Newton, Connecticut, not only devastated the local community, it had repercussions for employees and parents across the nation. Did this experience generate fears of safety for workers in educational institutions? In what ways can organizations address these shocks and help workers deal with the repercussions of these experiences?

On the positive side, life spillovers can also involve positive life experiences. We need to understand the positive nonwork experiences that can generate resiliency, hope, and optimism in our workforce. Relationships are a critical resource for resiliency. To what extent do positive relationships outside the workplace help employees build resiliency and the ability to deal with challenges across life domains? Looking at the other side of this coin, how can work relationships help employees develop resilience and other psychological states that they need to cope with nonwork challenges? I would love to see us have more conversations about the role of relationships in organizational life and the ability of relationships to help employees manage the work-life divide.

## **2. The membership of Midwest Academy continues to include a representation of both academics and practitioners. What are your views on the continued debate in academia regarding the struggle between research rigor and practical relevance?**

### **Belle Rose Ragins:**

As an industrial-organizational psychologist, I've always viewed research and practice as complementary. Management scholars need to do research that answers the "so what?" question. Practice informs our research, and our research should also serve as a resource for practitioners. Providing insights into practical phenomena is not antithetical to conducting rigorous, theoretically based tests. Theory is critical to our work because it helps us understand why a phenomenon occurs. Theory helps us see the big picture and understand interrelationships among concepts. Without theory, we end up with a bunch of unrelated "patchwork" findings—we're never able to see the forest through the trees. Exploratory research can be helpful as a foundation for building theory, but without understanding the "hows and whys," we can't move our field forward. Doing practical research is not antithetical to conducting theoretically driven work. A good theory is tremendously practical as it explains why phenomena occur. Theories can help managers understand the common processes driving behaviors at work.

I like to think of research as involving three domains: the Head, the Hands, and the Heart. The head focuses on knowledge and understanding the nuts and bolts of the

phenomenon. The hands involve practical utility—putting the knowledge to work. The heart is something we don't talk about often, but I think it is critical for good research. It is the passion for your work and the belief, deep in your heart, that it can make a difference. Great research involves all three of these domains.

**Ray Aldag:**

I've never viewed this as a necessary or desirable trade-off. Rigor and relevance are independent dimensions rather than mutually exclusive. I've written of charges that management research has little relevance to practitioners that "let me state my basic premise upfront: We *should* pay more attention to the relevance and impact of management research, but we should *not* do so in ways that jeopardize basic research or that amount to chasing fads" (Aldag, 1997, p. 9). I first addressed this issue in my 1992 Academy of Management Presidential Address (Aldag, 1992). I said then that I'd know that we had succeeded in demonstrating the relevance of our research for practice when Peter Jennings, instead of quoting from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, would open his broadcast with, "Today in the *Academy of Management Journal*, a promising approach to solving the nation's problems." Don Hambrick expanded on this call in his 1993 Presidential Address, "What if the Academy Actually Mattered?"

I have in the past suggested various ways to enhance relevance to practitioners. For example, we can try to do more of what Rich Bettis has labeled *inreach*—the channeling of information from practitioners to academics. This can be done, for instance, by surveying practitioners and asking them, "What should management researchers be studying, and how?" We can use qualitative methodologies to observe managers at work, and we can use group processes such as the nominal group technique or electronic brainstorming with practitioners to ask questions such as "What can be done to make research more relevant? Why doesn't management research have more impact?" We can develop "naïve" cognitive maps of practitioners and search them for constructs and relationships that are ignored or underemphasized in current management theories and research. We can use the Internet and other technologies to seek managers' inputs regarding important research topics and approaches, as well as to seek potential data sites and funding sources.

In addition, as I've written (Aldag, 1997),

We can seek practitioners as full collaborators on research projects, asking them to keep us focused and yell at us when we use unnecessary jargon or make unrealistic simplifying assumptions. But we must do more than this; we must value them as true symbionts in a mutual quest for relevance. We must try to ensure that they are fully involved and psychologically invested in all aspects of research, from conception to the drawing of ultimate conclusions. (p. 10)

I should stress, though, that I do not feel practitioners should simply be dictating our research directions. Instead, we should treat them as valuable collaborators in the process of pursuing rigorous yet practical research.

I'd like to state that I do think the academic reward system is heavily and unfortunately biased against practitioner-oriented publications. In my view, publications by academics in practitioner-oriented outlets are not only seen as of little value by their institutions but are often viewed negatively. The implication is that management scholars should be focusing on creating new knowledge rather than on "pandering" to practitioners. The same is true at major research universities for publishing textbooks. While textbooks may find important and original ways to incorporate, integrate, and present information, and while they are key tools in transmitting knowledge to future managers, they are often denigrated.

**3. How do you see management education evolving in the future? What gets you the most excited or concerns you the most about that?**

**Belle Rose Ragins:**

I'd like to talk about two concerns here. The first involves the increasing use of online education. The second involves the lack of diversity in business school faculty.

I have concerns about our increasing reliance and use of online education in the field of management. Although I understand that online education offers many benefits to both faculty and students, I question whether our students can effectively learn management skills through online formats. More than ever, managers need to develop effective listening and interpersonal skills. They need to learn how to manage conflict and how to establish effective teams. They need to develop their emotional intelligence, as well as skills reflecting cross-cultural competency and perspective taking. They need to learn how to create and maintain effective relationships at work. They need to know how to build and maintain employee commitment in the face of turbulent environments, organizational downsizing, and truncated psychological contracts. I am not convinced that online platforms are as effective as traditional face-to-face classroom settings for developing these critical skills. Although virtual teams and electronic communication have become a more integral part of managerial jobs, most managerial jobs require face-to-face interactions with subordinates, coworkers, supervisors, as well as clients and customers. I would argue that the most challenging issues in the workplace involve people, not tasks. Organizations do not function without people, and work is conducted through relationships. So these "soft skills" (which are actually quite hard) are simply essential for effective organizational functioning. Are online courses as effective as face-to-face courses for helping our students develop face-to-face skills?

I'm also concerned that online education will lead to a class-based stratification of our educational system. Students who come from privileged backgrounds can afford private educational institutions with small classrooms and low student-to-faculty ratios. These students will get face-to-face, individualized attention and mentoring from their professors. In essence, they are able to buy an educational experience that involves high-quality interactions with faculty. In contrast, students from middle- and working-class backgrounds will often end up in state schools, which are on the front-line of online education. What is the quality of their educational experience? Is online education creating a larger divide in the educational experiences of those from different classes in our county? What is the impact of online education on student retention, particularly for first-generation college students and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds? Educational equity is a huge issue in the United States, and I worry that online education can amplify class-based inequities in our educational system.

My second concern involves the lack of diversity in business school faculty. For example, in the United States, just 3.5% of business school faculty and administrators come from underrepresented minority groups. (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans) (Di Meglio, 2011). Women are also underrepresented in business schools. Only 21.4% of all tenure and tenure-track faculty at top business schools are women (Choi, 2014). We also witness gender gaps and glass ceilings when considering promotion to full professor. Citing an AACSB report, Damast (2011) observes that fewer than one in five female business school professors are full professors.

This has a number of implications for the future of management education. First, lack of faculty diversity is damaging to our students. Some students may receive their degrees without ever having a business professor who is Black, Latino, or Native American, or a full professor who is a woman. This is damaging for both majority and minority students. Lack of faculty diversity restricts role modeling for female students and students of color. How can our students aspire to be what they cannot see? The presence of female faculty and faculty of color can help refute prevailing racial and gender stereotypes about competence and power. What does our lack of faculty diversity tell our students about our institutional values and the importance of diversity in our own institutions? What message are we sending to our students about diversity? How can we tell them about the importance of inclusiveness and the importance of multicultural workplace when our own workplaces do not reflect these teachings? How can we teach them how to recruit and retain diverse talent when we are unable to do it ourselves?

Second, lack of faculty diversity is damaging from an organizational perspective. Diversity enriches and expands employees' workplace experiences. Some faculty may have

more diversity in their classrooms than in their departments or colleges. What are the implications of this for their personal and professional development? How does lack of faculty diversity affect our educational institutions? A diverse faculty may not only enrich the organization, but it may also be a key predictor in recruiting and retaining other female and underrepresented faculty. So there may be positive cycles, in which faculty diversity facilitates future diversity, and negative cycles that involve diversity stagnation in schools that are unable to recruit, retain, or promote underrepresented faculty.

Third, faculty diversity is critical for the community. Communities look to business schools, and their faculty, for leadership, knowledge, and expertise. How can our business schools help the community develop effective diversity programs and initiatives when we do not have such initiatives in place at our own institutions?

There are things we can do to address this issue. To start, we could rank order business schools on the retention and promotion of female faculty and underrepresented faculty of color (e.g., Black, Latino, Southeast Asian, and Native American in the United States). Imagine what would happen if faculty diversity played a key role in the public rankings of MBA and other business school programs?

Second, we could offer awards and incentives for business schools that develop best practices with respect to recruiting, retaining, and promoting female and underrepresented faculty. Which schools have had success and what strategies and programs have they used?

Third, we need to continue to provide support to underrepresented faculty through our professional associations (i.e., the Academy of Management). Female and minority business school faculty may feel isolated in their own institutions. Our professional meetings should not only provide information on cutting-edge research and teaching best practices but also support affirmation and safe havens for underrepresented faculty. This is particularly important for those who are not tenured. Our professional association needs to proactively help them in the tenure and promotion process. Developmental research workshops and mentoring relationships are critical in this regard.

We already do much of this—we need to do more. We need to get more senior people involved in giving back. We need to encourage junior faculty from underrepresented groups to come to our meetings. Our teaching, research, and ultimately the future relevance of our field depend on our faculty. We have to support our professional community, and diversity is central to this mission. We cannot understand the needs of a diverse workforce, train our students to work effectively in diverse teams, or help organizations and communities develop inclusive climates until we “get it” and “do it.” We have to have our own house in order.

**Ray Aldag:**

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) have been the subject of a current explosion of interest, enthusiasm, hype, and early applications. I think MOOCs, often called the “next big thing” in education, are both exciting and concerning. They obviously have the potential to deliver a tremendous amount of information to huge numbers of people. However, they often appear to be massively impersonal. Evidence to date suggests that dropout rates from MOOCs are more than 90%, that only a very small percentage of registrants actively participate, that valid online assessments are difficult, and that MOOCs could seriously disrupt and degrade degree programs, especially at lower tier institutions. It will be interesting to follow MOOCs’ trajectory.

Conversely, I think the Internet may also serve as a rich complement to traditional classroom instruction. It offers the clear benefit of access to relevant videos, blogs, and other information. In addition, I expect that it will evolve to help provide student-specific, intensely personal education. I also think that the Internet offers the opportunity for the development of learning/teaching communities. For example, instructors—perhaps worldwide—may work together to deliver collaborative courses with rich and complementary expertise, perspectives, and resources.

**4. The Midwest has always had a developmental mission, and as such, it is an organization that is inclusive of doctoral students as well as junior faculty at a wide range of schools. What advice do you have for young scholars just beginning to develop their stream of research?**

**Ray Aldag:**

I could go on (and on and on) in responding. Here are some suggestions that I think are important:

*Self-manage and learn to live in parallel*

- As a researcher, you are a project manager. Actively manage your projects.
- Set goals for all aspects of the research process. Set goals for the journals you will target, the completion times for various aspects of the project, and so on. Make these specific and difficult (i.e., “stretch” goals).
- Manage cues; block out time for research. It may seem that as a young scholar you have painfully little time for research. You are gearing up to teach classes, job hunting, perhaps starting a family. Believe me, though, that as your career matures, time constraints just get worse. To borrow from Joni Mitchell, “You don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone.” Research-management skills learned early will be valuable throughout your career.
- Keep track of research in progress. In a very visible place in your office, post a chart showing the status of your various projects.

- If you expect to maintain a healthy and sustained research program, you will have to “juggle” projects, working on various research streams in parallel. You’ll never have the luxury of saying, “I’ll start on that when I finish this.” As a corollary, never assume that research projects will always pan out; I have entire file drawers of “Research in Progress” that are going nowhere but that I can’t bear to throw out. It’s not coincidental that the acronym for “Research in Progress” is “RIP.” My point is, make sure you have multiple research projects going so that if one gets derailed you’re still on track.

*Get things under review*

- Just do it!!! The academic careers of some very good scholars have been ruined by writer’s block, fear of rejection, desire for “just one more” increment toward perfection, or simple procrastination. Early in your career, it is essential that you get closure on projects. *Be sure* to get papers out of your thesis as soon as possible. Often, the thesis is a big dead rat clogging the publication pipeline. Do a self-Heimlich.
- Play the pipeline. Recognize that there will be ebbs and flows in your research, and try to find ways to maintain some continuity. Consider research maturity cycles. Dovetail projects.
- Fit the manuscript to the journal. By this, I don’t just mean to get the format correct (though that’s important) but also the style and tone. An *ASQ* article has a different personality than a *JAP* article, than an *OBHDP* article. If you don’t know what those personalities are, spend some time reading the journals until you do.

*Be proactive and develop cosmopolitan contacts*

- Cream, alas, does not always rise to the top, even if it should. Successful careers generally require substantial proactivity and self-nomination—with faculty, heroes, and professional associations.
- This is a cosmopolitan profession. Throughout your career, you’re likely to be working with people from around the country and the world. Early in my career, I did a lot of work with Art Brief. Art was completing his PhD during my first year on the faculty at Wisconsin, and we continued to work together as he went to Kentucky, Iowa, NYU, Tulane, and now Utah. Art and I coauthored about 35 journal articles and 4 books, but even when we were at the peak of our work activity together, we never saw each other more than about twice a year. Now, with the Internet and e-mail, there is no reason to feel isolated as a researcher, no matter where you are.

*Get and keep good coauthors*

- You'll need some sole-authored work to get tenure at most good universities, but most of your publications will probably be coauthored. Selecting and keeping good coauthors is one of the most important, and undervalued, skills of a researcher.
- Coauthors provide different perspectives and expertise—can take over a project when you're overwhelmed or can bug you and help you meet deadlines. Find coauthors who
- Are reliable. If a coauthor doesn't do his or her share on a project, move on.
- Have complementary skills. These may be methodological skills, writing, and storytelling skills, or the abilities to make contacts or acquire data.
- Are experts/visible/respected in the profession. How can you get such coauthors? Show what you can contribute to a project—access to subjects or data, a perspective, or skill, or even *time* (a precious commodity that more senior scholars may be lacking). One good way to make contact with top scholars is to organize symposia for professional meetings and put together a strong slate.
- Have high energy and aspiration levels.
- Of course, coauthors will also expect *you* to be reliable, to provide complementary skills, and to offer energy. To keep good coauthors, you'll have to do your share.

*Seek broad input and develop a thick skin*

- Circulate your manuscripts broadly prior to submission. Paranoia doesn't help; I've known people who have been so afraid that someone would steal their ideas that they never got inputs from anyone. In my view, this is a serious, and perhaps fatal, mistake.
- *Everyone* who submits manuscripts to journals gets rejected at one point or another (and another, and another). Someone who tells you that he or she has never had a manuscript rejected is either lying or not aiming high enough.

*Always maintain intellectual integrity*

- Always, always, always.

**Belle Rose Ragins:**

Here are a few pieces of advice (in no particular order) that I hope are helpful:

*Read broadly and build/sharpen your methodological "tool belt"*

- You'll find interesting opportunities for cross-fertilization from related fields (e.g., psychology,

sociology, economics, and political science). What are the emerging paradigms in related disciplines? How can they inform your work? This helps you think outside the box and avoid the "silos of scholarship" that restrict our field.

- Take as many stats and methods courses as you can while you are in graduate school. Don't stop after you graduate. Never turn down the opportunity to learn a new technique. Try to stay on top of the latest statistical advances for as long as you can.

*Build and nourish your network of developmental relationships*

- Develop mentoring and other developmental relationships within and outside your institution. Remember that no one does it on his or her own; it takes a community to build a scholar. I love this quote by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor: "We don't accomplish anything in this world alone . . . and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something."
- Take the initiative to develop relationships. Reach out. You'd be surprised at the response! Many senior scholars are willing and eager to give back if you make that personal connection. Go to national and regional conferences. Develop relationships, but always keep in mind that relationships are a two-way street. Always think about the other person, and what you can give back to them. And when you reach your pinnacle of success (which will be sooner than you think), pay it forward.

*Follow your passion*

- I know everyone says this, but it is absolutely true. You have to love what you do, and the truly successful scholars love their work. Your passion sustains you. You have to believe in what you do and that your work makes a difference. Don't do what others want you to do, or what is "in" or "hot" at the moment. Do what *you* want to do. What makes you excited, engaged and alive? What keeps you awake at night and draws you into the rabbit hole of research during the day? Follow your passion.

*Don't take rejection personally*

- This is one of the most difficult challenges. You need to love what you do, but always remember that you are not defined by your work. Rejected manuscripts are part of the process in academe. Reviewers and editors will hopefully help you figure out the next steps for your paper, but recognize that you will get



many more rejections than acceptances in your academic career. It's part of the territory. We critique the work to improve it. But if you take the critique personally and view it as a reflection of your own competence or ability, it will simply deplete your energy for moving forward. It's a difficult dance.

- You need to love your work, but you are not your work. Do your best, but don't let the rejection drag you down; see it as an opportunity to improve and do better. If you detach your ego from your work, you'll be able to move your work to a much higher level. Take your ego out of the equation.

#### *Develop perspective-taking skills*

- This is a fundamental life skill that will help you be a better scholar, teacher, writer, and person. Put yourself in the shoes of others: the people who read your work, your students, your colleagues, and your audience. When you write—think about the reader. When you review a manuscript—think about the author. When you collaborate—think about your coauthors.
- Don't think about how you would feel if you were them—because you are not them. Think about how they might feel. It goes beyond empathy—it's a life skill. Start now. Be able to live outside your own skin.

#### *Be developmental*

- The peer-review process is fundamental to our field. You'll be called on to review others' work, and it's a great opportunity to develop your skills, both as a reviewer and an author. Always try to be developmental in your reviews. It's easy to point out what is wrong with a manuscript; it's much more of a challenge to help the author figure out how to address the problems and move the paper to the next level.
- Always make your feedback constructive and encouraging. Never say anything in a review that you wouldn't tell an author face-to-face. You can be rigorous and gentle.

#### **5. Finally, what do you feel are the most interesting changes or developments you have seen in the management field over the course of your career?**

##### **Ray Aldag:**

Since my career at Wisconsin is now in its 41st year, it seems that *every* change or development in the management field has occurred over the course of my career.

In terms of topic coverage, OCBs, heuristics, computerized decision support systems, sense making, and virtual

teams and organizations didn't exist, or were almost unknown, when I began my career. I am encouraged by the growth of research on—and application of—behavioral decision making. Much of our theorizing, including expectancy theory and path-goal theory, is still based on variants of subjective expected utility maximization theory. At least since Herbert Simon's Nobel Prize-winning work, including his introduction of satisficing and bounded rationality, and the work of Tversky and Kahneman (for which Kahneman won the Nobel Prize), we have known that the ideal "rational economic man" who maximizes utility is unrealistically simplistic. Perhaps more important, those findings are now being translated into practice. For example, Cass Sunstein, coauthor of *Nudge*, recently served as Administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Richard Thaler, the other *Nudge* coauthor, has worked with the British government to develop a "nudge unit" that is conducting some remarkable social experiments, with very encouraging early findings. A dramatic example of the power of nudges is the differences in organization donation rates across Europe. In those countries that have an "opt-in" process (i.e., check a box if you do want to donate your organizations), donation rates are less than 25%. In countries with an "opt-out" process, donation rates are above 98%. A simple nudge (changing the default option) has a tremendous impact.

Another example of change is the growing complexity of available analytical procedures. This is wonderful and offers enhanced opportunities to ferret out important relationships, including those between levels. I do, though, sometimes worry that the complexity of such procedures may sometimes obscure problems with research design and implementation. At the same time, it is increasingly easy to employ analytical procedures. Again, recalling my ancient past, in my early days, I spent nights in the basement of our university computer center waiting for my analyses to be run, almost invariably learning after many hours that I had misplaced a comma or failed to include a period or made another input error. SPSS-PC and related programs, some of them very sophisticated, make data analysis (once they are learned) remarkably quick and easy.

Google Scholar and related engines are fundamentally changing the research process. In the past, scholars had to work hard to find articles and other materials relevant to their areas of interest and would amass impressive files of materials, giving them substantial competitive advantages; some scholars were known as the "go-to" persons if you wanted to review literature on a particular topic. I admit to still having file drawers full of articles that I can now easily access online but am simply unable to discard (in my defense, I've now thrown out my computer punch cards). This has obvious benefits but also costs. As an example of the latter, it seems clear to me that in conducting literature reviews, Google Scholar is often employed to find recent

references and insert them almost without thought, often citing them incorrectly and making comments that suggest that the authors have made no attempt to read, let alone understand, the cited literature. I, for example, have seen painfully many incorrect references to my writings on the groupthink phenomenon, including many citing my criticisms of groupthink as being supportive. Other interesting developments include the proliferation of journals, with widely varying reputations, foci, and acceptance rates, the power of the Internet to access resources, facilitate collaboration, and provide channels for securing data—for instance, Mechanical Turk (see Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011) offers an inexpensive gateway to apparently high-quality worldwide samples.

### **Belle Rose Ragins:**

There have been amazing changes over the past 30 years. Let me highlight three here. First is the change in technology. When I started in the field, we were still using typewriters, the Internet was a figment of someone's imagination, and our idea of high tech was Xerox machines! I think technology has shaped the way we work, the way we think, and our interactions with others. We now have unprecedented access to information and we can work in virtual teams that span the globe. This change has given us tremendous opportunities and resources, but we do run the risk of depersonalization. Electronic communication is a poor substitute for face-to-face interactions, and I wonder if our reliance on technology is depleting our ability to foster deep and meaningful connections with others. Can we build authentic, trusting and meaningful relationships online?

The second change involves gender diversity. As I mentioned earlier, we are witness to unprecedented changes in population demographics, which has significant implications for management education and the workplace. In terms of our profession, while we have not seen adequate change in racial and ethnic diversity, we have seen more gender diversity among our faculty. I think back to my first position, where I was one of two women in the entire business school. Women were entering the workforce in increasing numbers, but we had an absolute dearth of women in faculty and leadership positions. We have seen significant change in this regard. For example, looking at the past 15 years, nearly half (46%) of the past AOM presidents have been women. So we are seeing a change with respect to leadership in our field. Although women still face a glass ceiling when it comes to promotion to full professor, we do see more gender balance in our faculty and our doctoral students. I think this has enriched our field, and I think it may influence the way we approach our work and our areas of inquiry. For example, I don't think it's a coincidence that studies of work-life, diversity, and even relationships in the workplace correspond with increases in gender diversity among management professors. Gender

diversity can change climates and foster role modeling. These changes facilitate more gender diversity in our profession. Much like the field of psychology, I think the field of management may be transformed from a male-typed to a gender-balanced field in the next 20 years.

The third change involves the positive organizational scholarship (POS) movement. Perhaps facilitated by the positive psychology movement, POS focuses on the best of the human condition in organizations (see Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Instead of focusing on phenomena reflecting average or dysfunctional conditions, POS examines the positive end of the continuum that can lead to states of flourishing, growth, and resilience. A POS lens allows us to study a fresh new range of dynamics, processes, and outcomes. This has tremendous possibilities for our field.

### **Editors' Concluding Thoughts**

Reflecting on the responses given by each of these scholars, they clearly have some very different and passionate views on a number of issues, but they also share some common perspectives on others. For example, both scholars view the relationship between theoretical rigor and practical relevance of research as complementary, where one informs the other, but that there is much more that management academics could do to improve the balance of the two.

Both scholars see technology as playing a bigger role in the future of management education, whether it is used as a way of enhancing and supporting the traditional classroom or through new avenues of education, such as MOOCs. At the same time, they express concern about the impersonal nature of technology and the potential negative implications for the assessment of learning, the development of soft skills, and the quality of the educational experience, particularly for first-generation college students or those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition to affecting management education, technology is also changing the research landscape as well—facilitating collaborations with colleagues around the world and increasing our access to diverse and interesting journals.

In terms of advice for aspiring scholars, the two provide very pointed and practical suggestions. Both stress the need to be proactive about building and nourishing a network of developmental relationships within one's institution and the profession, as well as selecting and maintaining good coauthor relationships. They also argue the importance of reading widely, maintaining a pipeline of output, and developing a "thick skin" by not taking rejection or criticism personally.

We believe that differences expressed in their responses to our questions are reflective of their respective research passions. Dr. Ragins speaks to the continuing challenge of diversity, both in terms of how it is affecting general workforce demographics and the future of management

education. While there have been strides toward improving this, she argues that there is much more that can be done within our institutions and professional associations to address this. Dr. Aldag is equally passionate about the growth of research on behavioral decision making and, better yet, the translation of those findings into practice. He also argues for the importance of maintaining research integrity within the field and that management academics must be sensitive to the desire for “socially acceptable” results.

We appreciate the time that Dr. Ragins and Dr. Aldag gave in providing us with such insightful responses to these questions and hope that their thoughts on these issues are particularly helpful to young academics seeking guidance for the future.

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