How to Be a Successful Publisher

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Abstract
One of the greatest challenges that new scholars face is getting their work published in peer-reviewed journals. Publications weigh heavily in decisions to hire, promote, and tenure faculty, and they occupy a central position in studies about departmental prestige rankings. The problem is that most scholars find success in publishing to be elusive. The purpose of this article is to provide readers with a series of tips to help them organize their academic lives so that they may become a successful publisher. None of the tips I suggest are for the faint of heart, and no tricks or gimmicks are offered. Instead, the broad theme is that scholars need to take agency over their careers. Put simply, your success is your responsibility!

Keywords
publishing success, agency

In the course of an academic career, you will be called upon to do many challenging things. Some of these tasks are explicitly job related, including teaching classrooms full of students who will import varying levels of aptitude and interest for the subject matter, serving on committees to be a good departmental citizen, and mentoring students through their degree tracks. Other challenges you will face are more interpersonal, including maintaining civility when interacting with difficult colleagues and navigating around the misguided agendas of clueless administrators. And while we must face all of these challenges, one of the most important still remains: publishing our work in peer-reviewed journals.

But why is publishing so important? Like it or not, peer-reviewed publications are the “currency of the business.” One’s publication record is weighed heavily in hiring

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decisions as well as those associated with promotion and tenure. The publication records of a department’s faculty are also often of central concern to potential graduate students who may be contemplating where to go for their graduate studies. Furthermore, publications tend to dominate articles about faculty and department rankings more than anything else (Copes, Khey, & Tewksbury, 2012; Khey, Jennings, Higgins, Schoepfer, & Langton, 2011; Kleck & Barnes, 2011; Long, Boggess, & Jennings, 2011; Orrick & Weir, 2011). All things being equal, departments want to hire, promote, and retain people who have been successful in getting their work into print over the course of their career.

The problem is that the steps one needs to take to be a successful publisher are a mystery to most of the people in the field. To be sure, the majority of our journals boast a rejection rate that is typically 80% or higher (Vaughn, Perfecto, & Charand, 2004). Clearly, the overwhelming majority of those who send their work for publication consideration at peer-reviewed journals have found success to be exceedingly elusive. In addition, the typical full career for someone working at a research institution—those places where the pressure to publish should be the most intense and the organizational supports to be successful the most well-developed—is around 20 or so publications over 20 years (Clear, 2001; Frost, Phillips, & Clear, 2007). Such a record would represent a success story, but even those totals do not exactly scream “prolific author.”

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to lay out a series of guidelines that, if taken seriously, may help you become a successful publisher. There are, of course, several works on this very subject that provide detailed, step-by-step accounts of the mechanics of crafting peer-reviewed articles (Cullen, 1989; Pratt, in press; Thyer, 1994), which should be read carefully. Alternatively, my purpose here is to take a broader approach to the publishing process. This article is less about the details of how to write an article and more about how to organize your academic life so that you can become successful at publishing.

So why am I even qualified to write this article? Well, I think there are three reasons. First, I was fortunate that early on in my graduate studies, I was able to learn from the best in the business: Frank Cullen. Beginning as a 2nd-year doctoral student at the University of Cincinnati and lasting the full course of my career, I have been able to collaborate with Frank several times (Cullen, Pratt, Levrant, & Moon, 2002; Pratt & Cullen, 2000, 2005; Pratt, Cullen, Blevins, Daigle, & Madensen, 2006; Pratt, Cullen, Blevins, Daigle, & Unnever, 2002; Pratt, Cullen, et al., 2010; see also Lowenkamp, Cullen, & Pratt, 2003; Unnever, Cullen, & Pratt, 2003). Every time I worked with Frank, I learned a great deal about how to ask questions, how to frame arguments, and how to contextualize findings in ways that peer-reviewed outlets (and their readers) appreciate. I suspect that the only reason he is not writing this article is because he is committed to another piece in this same issue. And in addition to working with Frank, I have also been able to work with a number of great scholars who themselves have been incredibly successful at publishing, including some well-established scholars like Mike Reisig and Alex Piquero (Pratt, Holtfreter, & Reisig, 2010; Pratt, Turner, & Piquero, 2004; Reisig & Pratt, 2000, 2011; Reisig, Pratt, & Holtfreter, 2009; Reisig, Wolfe, & Pratt, 2012; see also Holtfreter, Beaver, Reisig, &
Pratt, 2010; Holtfreter, Reisig, & Pratt, 2008; Turner, Piquero, & Pratt, 2005), those who are more mid-career like Jean McGloin and Chris Sullivan (McGloin & Pratt, 2003; McGloin, Pratt, & Maahs, 2004; McGloin, Pratt, & Piquero, 2006; McGloin, Sullivan, Piquero, & Pratt, 2007; Pratt, McGloin, & Fearn, 2006; Sullivan, McGloin, Pratt, & Piquero, 2006; see also Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt, & Margaryan, 2004), and those in the early stages of building a publication record like Jill Turanovic (Pratt & Turanovic, 2012; Turanovic & Pratt, 2013, 2014; Turanovic, Reisig, & Pratt, 2014; Turanovic, Rodriguez, & Pratt, 2012). Each time I work with scholars of this caliber, I learn something new and I get better at what I do.

Second, I have racked up a rather impressive roster of mistakes in the process of trying to get my work published that have been highly instructive as self-induced “teachable moments.” For example, I have kidded myself about time management (“sure, I can make significant progress on this manuscript by cramming my writing time into half-hour shifts scattered over a month. Yeah, I totally can.”). Furthermore, in my haste to get an article off my plate and under review at a journal, I have framed research questions too narrowly because I did not take more time to read additional literature or give myself sufficient time to think through how the study should be presented. And finally, I have, on occasion, been a wiseass in my replies to reviewers’ comments when afforded the opportunity to revise and resubmit my work. Reviewer comments can be frustrating at times (we always tend to think that a manuscript is perfect the way it was originally submitted), and you may feel the urge to take a verbal swing at them in your memorandum of revision. Don’t. Trust me, it will not end well for you. And this list could go on but you get my point: The cruel irony of wisdom is that you often have to screw up before you can become wise.

And third, although I did not know that this would be the case upon entering graduate school, I have been able to publish consistently over the last decade and a half, having now accumulated nearly 100 publications in various forums (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, chapters in edited volumes, books). Over this time, I have gained experience and (I hope) some talent for publishing—one reason, I suspect, why I was invited to contribute this essay. And with that said, I have provided 5 tips for becoming a successful publisher, with my apologies to those readers who expect there to be 10, and to Spinal Tap enthusiasts who expect there to be 11.

I. Develop a Publishing Philosophy

The first step on the road to becoming a successful publisher is that you have to decide how good you want to be. We all have competing demands on our time. We all have things about this job that we like more than others. But being good at anything means putting in a lot of time—what Malcolm Gladwell (2008) referred to as the 10,000 hours. If you just are not willing to invest that kind of time on your publication record, there is nothing wrong with that. To be sure, sacrifices in other areas of your life and career must be made if you are to truly be good at publishing and many people (sane people) seek a more balanced approach to their lives and work. If that sounds like you, great; just know that you should not expect to be very good at publishing. Put simply,
your expectations for your publishing success should match your willingness to put in the time necessary to actually be good.

And keep in mind that your publishing philosophy can change over time. For example, early on in my career while I was still in graduate school, I adhered to the philosophy of “ABC, Always Be Closing.” This was a phrase borrowed from a speech delivered by Alec Baldwin’s character in the 1992 movie Glengarry Glen Ross. And while Baldwin’s version of “ABC” was meant as a scathing and profane critique to a room full of what he saw as incompetent real estate salesmen, I took it to mean that to be good at publishing I had to finish what I started. Not only did I have to “close” but I also had to “always” be doing it. The phrase even found its way into the graduate student lexicon at the University of Cincinnati at the time, where we posted a sign above our office coffee pot that read “coffee is for closers only” (another reference to what we saw as Baldwin’s brilliant philosophy).

Adhering to that philosophy served me well for a number of years. I learned to finish manuscripts, I learned how to anticipate the concerns that would be raised by reviewers, I learned how to navigate the revise and resubmit process, and I simply got better at the craft with each additional publication experience. Over time, however, my philosophy about publishing has shifted. I am no longer really concerned about “closing”—I have published enough now that my drive to finish manuscripts and to get them into print is just part of my identity and therefore it is not something I really have to think about anymore. But what motivates me at this stage of my career is that I am writing the kinds of manuscripts that I would like to read. I write for myself and for my co-authors, who deserve nothing but the best from me. I am committed to the idea that whatever I am writing—for whatever outlet I am writing for—needs to be the absolute best work I am capable of producing at that moment (including this article!). This is not to say that I was not committed to high-quality work when I was younger; I certainly was. I am just saying that my obsession with pushing my own boundaries and always trying to improve has taken the center stage. But as obsessions go, I figure that focusing on writing quality is healthier than, say, becoming a Doomsday Prepper or a hoarder (although I do have a lot of books . . .). Either way, I still publish at a high rate; yet, the philosophy that guides how I go about doing it is different these days. And it can certainly be that way for you too. Your success is your responsibility. Take agency over your career.

2. Organize Your Life Around Producing Peer-Reviewed Articles

Once you have set your sights on becoming a successful publisher, your first key task—if you have not done it already—is to perfect the art of successful time management. In particular, you will need to set aside large blocks of time (I advocate for clearing four uninterrupted hours as a “writing shift”) for writing peer-reviewed articles each week—time that you can consistently count on as your writing time. If you think you can be a successful publisher by writing in scattered 1-hour chunks throughout the week, you are kidding yourself. People who say that they can do so successfully are
either lying or are not nearly as successful as they think they are. Just as an example, I set aside two reliable writing shifts per week and do my best to take advantage of additional time when it is available, but at minimum, I always know that I have those two shifts every week. Furthermore, I schedule my writing shifts between 8 a.m. and noon because that is when my brain is at its sharpest (I am worthless for writing at night—I would rather read or watch episodes of Justified on my iPad). And what is important to note is that writing shifts are “writing only” shifts, meaning that I do not allow myself to do anything that is not directly related to writing. I place a ban on checking email and the ringer is off on my phone; no distractions, no television, no Sharknado. Organizing your life this way is a necessary condition for being a successful publisher of peer-reviewed work.

Yet, keep in mind there will be a constant barrage of threats to your desire to protect your writing time—threats that will attempt to force (or lure) you into re-organizing your life in a way that moves publishing down on your list of priorities. They are usually framed as “opportunities” in one form or another (e.g., to prepare a new course, to serve on an “important” committee, to organize and host a conference, to join a senior colleague on a new edition of their textbook), yet they are nothing more than attempts by others to use your time to serve themselves. So how do you buffer yourself against these intrusions that threaten to keep the publications section of your vitae embarrassingly short? Here’s how: Whenever you are presented with a task that does not involve publishing peer-reviewed articles, ask yourself “What does this have to do with my research?” If it is not related to your research, politely decline whatever it is you are being asked to do. Of course, there are times when you may have no choice, like when someone above you on the administrative food chain asks you to do something. Saying no is more difficult then, yet I suggest you try it first anyway (at minimum, ask for something in return, like a course release). But if the answer is at your discretion, decline when you can. Fiercely protect the time you devote to publishing peer-reviewed articles.

In addition, any departure from working on peer-reviewed articles should be directly related to your future publishing success and, for many of you, your future tenurability. Such a departure might, for example, come in the form of working on a grant application. This is understandable as universities often place pressure on faculty to secure external funding for their research—for some departments it is virtually a requirement if one expects to be tenured and promoted. Keep in mind, however, that putting together a grant proposal takes a lot of time, so if your grant does not get funded, that time is simply gone. If your grant does get funded, you will inevitably spend a considerable amount of time managing it, not necessarily publishing off of it (at least not in the short term). And as you do so, the tenure clock keeps ticking. And as a wise and trusted friend and colleague of mine once said: “Tenure clock don’t give a shit.” So at minimum, recognize how much time something like a grant is going to require from you and have a strategy for maintaining your journal article writing schedule.

In addition, any departure that you make from working on peer-reviewed articles should be short in duration (maybe a couple of months). Whether it was working on a
grant application, putting together a book proposal for a university press, or writing a technical report to a funding agency, it is critical to make sure that you get back to focusing on peer-reviewed articles as quickly as possible. And such departures from working on peer-reviewed articles should be organized in a way that makes it easy enough for you to get back on the peer-reviewed track. Indeed, you should make sure that you can “self-regulate” in this way. Put simply, remember that in learning how to be a successful publisher, you are working to become a social scientist, not a painter or a poet. Successful publishers do not sit around waiting for a spark of inspiration to serve as their muse; they just get to work. And they work nights, weekends, and holidays. They take calls from co-authors at 10 p.m. on a Sunday night over Christmas break to discuss the first paragraph of a discussion section for an article they are working on together. And they see that as perfectly normal behavior. This is just what successful publishers do. That is how you organize your life around producing peer-reviewed articles.

3. Read All the Time

This is a part where those seeking publishing success, but have had a tough time finding it, are probably failing. Reading takes time, and time is a precious academic commodity—one that scholars will often choose to fill with other tasks that for whatever reason seem more immediately pressing (e.g., preparing a class lecture, grading graduate student essays, running to another committee meeting, spending time writing an article to submit to a journal). And besides, many feel as though they got their fill of reading during their doctoral studies where they had to read for their coursework, read even more for their comprehensive exams, and then immerse themselves in the literature for their dissertation. Unfortunately, for many in the discipline, the habit of reading is broken by the time the ink is dry when their advisors sign off on their PhD. What this means is that these scholars’ knowledge base on a given topic peaks at the moment they are allowed into the academic ranks, and actually declines over time as new research gets produced and goes unread. Failing to keep up with the literature ensures that you will be in the dark about what the next contribution to the literature should be, the primary symptom of which that I see as a reviewer for journals is that authors will be asking a question in their study that might have been a decent contribution to the literature a decade earlier, but certainly not now.

Conversely, virtually without exception, successful publishers are all voracious readers. And more often than not, they tend to have three things in common. First, they keep up with the production of literature in their substantive areas. This is actually not a very hard thing to do, and with Google Scholar alerts it has become even easier now. If you make reading a regular part of your workweek—like the time you would budget for all of the other tasks facing you—you would be surprised how easy it is to stay on top of a body of literature. So designate a day as a reading day (mine is Friday) and spend that time staying on top—and therefore staying ahead of most of the field—of the work being produced in your area.

Second, successful publishers are generally unconcerned about disciplinary boundaries. As a result, they read outside of the discipline as a matter of professional routine.
To be sure, criminology is a unique academic discipline in that after a long history of being “owned” by sociology, it has become extremely interdisciplinary in recent years, with psychology, biology, political science, and economics all coming on to the playing field. As such, the successful publishers consume the relevant literature wherever it might be found. And seeing how those in other academic disciplines think about and test similar research questions will inevitably inspire in you new questions to ask and new ways to go about answering them. What may surprise you most is seeing how far ahead of other disciplines criminology is in certain areas. For example, scholars in mathematics have recently discovered the existence of “hot spots” of criminal activity (Berestycki, Rodriguez, & Ryzhik, 2013) nearly two and a half decades after Sherman, Gartin, and Buerger (1989) developed the concept. Such reading may also reveal, however, how far behind we are in other areas, such as in understanding how people (including offenders) make decisions (see, for example, Kahneman, 2011).

Finally, successful publishers do not confine their reading to academic sources. Instead, they are constantly reading simply because their lives are organized around the principle that consuming new knowledge is a necessary precursor to producing it. Thus, successful publishers are eclectic with respect to the authors they read and are open to what can be learned from them. For myself, a few examples might help. Most of us had to read Hemmingway in high school. If you were to revisit his work now—or at least his earlier work before he went pro with his drinking—you will discover the power of the short, punchy sentence. Charles Tittle’s (1995) book *Control Balance* contains a number of these short sentences that are used quite effectively. Read it. In addition, a careful read of John Steinbeck’s work (pick anything he has written) will reveal that he can go on for page after page and never use a word that has more than two syllables, and yet the thematic content being presented is anything but simple. The lesson there is to strive toward the ability to explain complex phenomena using language that is not. This is not only a hard thing to do, but it is also at odds with much of the academic socialization we receive from kindergarten through graduate school. In particular, little kids are rewarded for having a big vocabulary, high schoolers are rewarded when they can write at a college level, college students are rewarded when they write papers that have words that might be found on a GRE (Graduate Records Examination) exam, and graduate students are rewarded when they can have conversations about heteroskedasticity and multicollinearity and actually know what they are talking about. It is no surprise, then, that as scholars they will then go on to use words like “utilize” (instead of use) and “lacuna” (instead of gap). Such scholars are, I suspect, worried that if they use small words instead of big ones, they will not come across as “smart.” Successful publishers, on the contrary, use small words all the time because they are sufficiently confident that the quality of their ideas satisfies the “smart” criterion on its own, which frees them up to be clear and simple in their choice of language. You would do well to follow their lead. Have the confidence to ditch the big word when a small one could be used in its place. And stop using lacuna.

As a final example, I will point you to the work of Tom Robbins. Reading his books is like taking a graduate seminar in effective word choice. Whereas Steinbeck has the gift of discussing social complexities using the simplest of language, Robbins’s skill...
lies in describing the every day and ordinary using language that I would never in a million years think to use. It is not a gimmick, it is just exceptionally creative. But what it reveals is that it is perfectly natural to agonize over a single word in a sentence in an effort to get it right. Doing so is not pathological, nor should it be confused with writer’s block. It is instead totally normal, and successful writers and publishers treat such word debates as a healthy way to produce a good product. If you are debating with yourself about a word, get up out of your chair and walk a lap around the office to think about it or call a colleague and talk it out. That is how good work gets produced.

The point of all of this is to highlight the notion that if you want to be a successful publisher, you will need to make reading a central component of your academic life. You need to read to keep up with the knowledge base in your substantive area. You need to read outside of the discipline so that you can stay as current as possible with the broader academic debates to which your work might speak. And in reading non-academic work regularly, you will find ideas, inspiration, and technique, all of which will elevate your odds of becoming a successful publisher.

4. Engage in Honest Self-Assessment

One of the things that successful publishers do on a regular basis is that they engage in honest self-reflection about what they do and do not do well. This is not fun; it is quite painful if you are truly honest with yourself about it. This is where you assess your skill set concerning the various components that go into producing publishable work. The questions you will need to ask yourself include things like: How well do I ask questions? How well do I write? How well do I know my theory? How well do I know my method? How good am I at data analysis? Am I good at writing each part of a manuscript (introduction, theoretical framework, method, results, and discussion)? If you are not sure about the answers to these questions, the field will communicate the answers to you. And while you may disagree with those answers, they are not wrong, and here is why.

In a fascinating study in social psychology by Kruger and Dunning (1999), research participants were assessed on dimensions of humor, grammar, and logic. They were then ranked according to their scores on these scales and were subsequently asked to estimate where they thought that they fell along the distribution of scores. The results showed that those in the top quartile actually underestimated their abilities (they performed slightly better than they rated themselves), and the third quartile was the most accurate in that their self-assessments mirrored their actual performance. The interesting findings, however, came from those in the bottom quartile—a group of people who overestimated their abilities to an extent that would be funny if it were not so sad. In particular, those who fell around the 10th percentile across all dimensions in terms of their actual performance consistently estimated that they scored around the 60th percentile or higher—a gap between perception and reality that almost feels like it was made up. It wasn’t. What is particularly troubling is that not only were these participants deemed “incompetent” with respect to these cognitive dimensions, but also they
suffer a dual deficit in that they clearly lacked the cognitive skills to recognize their incompetence. Fortunately, Kruger and Dunning (1999) also found that efforts to improve the “metacognitive” skills of the poorest performers did help them recognize the limitations of their abilities.

So what does this mean for becoming a successful publisher? When scholars have trouble getting published, oftentimes their reaction to their lack of success is to externalize blame in a host of creative ways. Most often, I hear things like this: “The reviewers really don’t ‘get’ what I’m doing” (they do not get it because you do not get it well enough yourself to convey your idea to them clearly); or, “I take big swings with my papers and journals don’t like big swings” (it is more likely that your claim that “everyone else is wrong and I’m right” is a gross overstatement, and you probably do not understand the literature nearly as well as you think you do); and “It’s a paper that’s kinda too soc for the crim crowd but too crim for the soc crowd” (the more likely culprit is that your paper does not have an identity because you have not given it one, and you probably do not even really know what it is that you want the paper to accomplish). My personal favorite was when I heard that “The only way to get published is if you’re friends with the editor” (a faculty member actually expressed this “insight” to a classroom of doctoral students).

While saying such things might make rejected authors feel better, and such statements may represent a kind of technique of neutralization, none of them are valid. Instead, if your papers are getting rejected consistently, it means your work is not as good as you think it is. And chances are, the reviewers are pointing out things that you need to improve upon. Are reviewers picking on the kinds of questions you are asking? Are they honing in on the types of methods you tend to use? Are they constantly riding your case about your analytic techniques? Do they say that your writing needs work or that you have not done a good job of covering the literature? If they are, paying attention to them will help you improve your “metacognitive skills” by noting those parts of your professional repertoire that you need to improve upon. This is not to say that reviewers are infallible; they are certainly capable of getting things wrong sometimes. But overall, I have found that the review process generally works out the way it should and that good work gets published and bad work does not. And remember: Your success is your responsibility; take agency over your career. With that in mind, what are you going to do to get better? One way is to follow suggestion 5 below.

5. Copy the Habits of Successful People

Publishing success does not happen by accident, nor is its existence a mystery. It starts the moment you enter graduate school, when shortly after walking through the door it becomes clear which students are among the “top” students. These students will be respected by the faculty, will be working on funded projects, and will probably already have the beginning of a solid publication record. If you want to be successful yourself, these are the students you should talk to and hold up as models for your own behavior. Of course, there will also be those students—and even some junior faculty—who will be jealous of the successful students and who will want to attribute their success to
various forms of undeserved favoritism. This is where taking agency over your career starts, where if you choose to follow the advice of envy-crippled whiners then you deserve to be unsuccessful.

Instead, you will benefit greatly when you talk to successful scholars! Make it a point to talk to them all the time about what they do. Talk to them about how they organize and protect their time—you will get a wealth of valuable advice when you do so. Talk to them about how they actually go about their writing process. For example, some scholars engage in what could be termed an iterative process, where they write a (very) rough draft and then go over it again and again with incremental improvements being made across multiple drafts. Others (myself included) prefer to do a lot of outlining, where the structure is laid out clearly and each part of the paper is mapped out so that the actual writing of it takes place at the end of a very long process of thinking. Neither method should be privileged over the other, but you should get a good idea early on about which approach works best for you.

In addition, talk with successful scholars in detail about how they approach every section of an article. I am serious, literally every section. How do they structure their introductions? Do they have a particular approach to the theoretical framework section? Do they structure their methods sections in particular ways and attempt to give it a certain kind of tone? How detailed do they tend to get in their results sections? Do they have a game plan for how they tend to approach their discussion sections? What do they like their tables to look like? In the process of asking these questions, your approach to writing each of the sections of a peer-reviewed article will become more disciplined and you will write every part of your manuscript with more care, clarity, and competence.

And by following the advice of successful publishers you will quickly learn that there is no trick to publishing. My favorite quote from a scholar concerning publication productivity comes from a good friend and co-author, Alex Piquero. When asked about how he has been able to be so consistently prolific over the years, his reply was, “When I start a paper, my computer screen looks just like yours.” Boom. Being good at publishing is by no means easy, but it certainly is possible.

**Conclusion**

A recent study by Conley and Onder (2013) found that around 80% of the published work in economics journals was done by around 20% of the scholars. They also found that it was only the top-ranked PhD students (those ranked in the 90th percentile or higher) who ended up publishing with any consistency over the next 6 years. Even students ranked in the 80th percentile in “elite” doctoral programs (e.g., Harvard, Stanford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT]) failed to publish very much at all over the next 6 years. What this means is that, despite being intelligent enough to get into a doctoral program (with the requisite impressive academic record up until then), tenacious enough to survive it, and focused enough to finish their dissertations, most scholars who do so will end up failing when it comes to publishing.
Our discipline is no different. The harsh reality is that most people, including those that graduate from elite programs, are never going to enjoy considerable success in publishing. But even if this broad statistical pattern holds true, it does not mean that any individual scholar’s future is preordained. Being good at research is more of a choice than an inevitable fate. Those who care deeply about the quality of their work and who are willing to put in the time to improve their skills—even in the face of certain talent deficits—will be better at publishing than those who might be inordinately bright but fail to invest in the research enterprise day in and day out. When it comes to publishing, there are no tricks; there are no shortcuts. Yet, publishing with consistency can be done! It just requires a lot of hard work and a heavy dose of humility to recognize that you still have a lot to learn.

In the end, I hope these tips prove useful to you as you go about trying to build your publication record. Getting published is a great feeling. I still remember my first one—seeing it in the issue of the *Journal of Criminal Justice* in 1998 was the coolest thing that had ever happened to me in my academic life up to that point. And when I got the word that my first *Criminology* article got accepted in 2000, I received a wonderful letter from Editor Bob Bursik—a letter that I still have to this day. I still even get a serious rush when I see the page proofs for one of my forthcoming articles—that is when it truly becomes “real” for me. And I love seeing how excited new scholars get—whether they are my co-authors or not—when they experience these things for the first time themselves. But most important, I get the opportunity to produce and to disseminate new knowledge that will hopefully help make people’s lives a little better. So take agency over your career. Work hard and remain open to learning new skills. And I wish you all the best!

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