

Chapter 56

Ed Fink, Role Model

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I am, perhaps, an unusual member of those who enthusiastically agreed to write something for Ed Fink's Festschrift. I have not been on a faculty with Ed, I have never published with Ed, nor have I been a student in one of the departments lucky enough to have Ed as a faculty member. Nevertheless, Ed has had a positive impact on my life, and I am happy to pay tribute to him.

Initially, when I was a graduate student, Ed put together the "NCA Summer Conference 2008: Methods and Measures for Communication and Cognition Research." Ed gathered together the brightest minds in Communication Science to discuss ways to improve our research methods and statistical analyses. It was a relatively intimate gathering, and I found myself talking to friendly senior scholars whose work had been influential in my own thinking and development as a scholar. I still recall Dave Ewoldsen's keynote on the importance of thinking about time as a variable in our work. Attending that conference helped me gain confidence that I could contribute to what had previously seemed like an exclusive club. Whenever I work on a paper about methods or statistics, I find myself thinking back to that weekend.

But perhaps more importantly, Ed has been a great role model for how a senior (i.e., old) scholar should interact with early-career researchers. From the first time I met him at a conference as a grad student, he has always been friendly and happy to chat with me, even though I wasn't one of his students or colleagues. Ever since he found out I was fond of reading, he has supplied me with numerous book suggestions and followed up with phone calls whenever I read something he suggested. I always look forward to our chats, both in person and on the phone. As I age (gracefully) into my own mid-career, I try to

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remember Ed's generosity with his time. At conferences, I try to follow Ed's example by engaging with graduate students and early-career scholars. Hopefully they will remember my friendliness when they too become senior scholars. In this way, Ed's influence in our field will hopefully not just be measurable in citations but in the congeniality of those of us in communication science for generations to come.