

Original Article

Reflections from The Next Generation: These are the Voyages of Students in Evolutionary Psychology

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Abstract:

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Introduction

In June 2003, John Tooby was the invited guest speaker for the student lunch at the annual conference of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES). During his compelling presentation about establishing successful research programmes and academic positions, he stated that whenever he released a newly completed graduate student into the world at large, he could not help but wonder if he had mistakenly marred their foreheads with the “mark of death.” These new graduates, who were seeking professional and academic positions, are evolutionary-based researchers. After his statement, the room fell silent, and a quick glance around the table revealed deep concern on the faces of the 30 or so attendees. The student representative for the society had invited Tooby for specifically this reason. It was hoped that he would enlighten students as to the battle they would soon face, and express to them that their best weapon would be their list of publications.

Casual conversations with students and recent graduates indicate a genuine concern for job prospects. How does someone with a doctoral degree in hand successfully land an academic position? Do students need to obscure or erase any reference to Evolutionary Psychology (EP), or is it best to brazenly display their training with pride? These questions motivated the writing of this paper. We are recent graduates who have successfully acquired positions in academic institutions, although each of us has been trained in EP. Here we share our experiences in an attempt to offer encouragement and hope to students and supervisors actively engaged in evolutionary-based research. Although the journey may be convoluted and at times difficult, it is possible for students in EP to acquire academic positions while remaining true to their discipline.

Some readers may be puzzled as to why this article is necessary. The academic job market is very competitive regardless of one's theory, and thus, why should the difficulties of evolutionary psychologists be remarkable? After all, as Dobzhansky (1973) wrote, "nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution." Should not psychologists welcome evolutionary explanations with an open embrace or at least a rigorous empirical test? In reality, many psychologists are resistant because of accepted assumptions about human nature and misconceptions of what evolutionary psychology is and what it implies.

In 1992, Tooby and Cosmides criticized what they called the "Standard Social Science Model" (SSSM), which holds that humans are passive recipients of cultural influences perpetuated through socialization. In the SSSM, the particular features of culture are thought to be arbitrary, rather than being shaped by any inherent human tendencies (see also Pinker, 2002). Although Behaviorism has lost its prominence in modern psychology, many of its assumptions remain strong in the minds of many psychologists (see Plotkin, 2004).

Some of the resistance is very likely due to misconceptions, including the presumption that EP supports unsavory political ideologies. Those who do not understand the field interpret it as being related to such things as genetic determinism and eugenics. As one may expect from a profession that many enter in order to help others, a large proportion of psychologists are idealistic and politically progressive. Some may believe that EP promotes a justification of social problems, such as the oppression of women, rape, or institutionalized racism. These beliefs are still heard at conferences today, despite the efforts of many to clarify these misunderstandings that appear in numerous texts.

This article is aimed at both students and supervisors, and each of us has attempted to recollect experiences that may be of interest to this audience. Students must rely on their supervisors in order to receive sufficient training, and supervisors must comprehend the situation that students face in order to provide them adequate training. Therefore, we have undertaken this collaboration to provide at least some clues as to students' experiences. We have endeavored to discuss facets of our training that were successful, or what supervisors "did right," and include mention of behaviors that we, as students, performed to help us find employment.

Maryanne Fisher

My journey into EP started when I had the good fortune to enroll in Irwin Silverman's third year undergraduate course on the topic. Before his course, I had vaguely decided to become a clinician or therapist of some sort. However, by the end of his course, I was firmly convinced that I needed to explore EP further, and approached him about supervision for my undergraduate thesis. He agreed, and I successfully completed my thesis, and then returned to work with him as a doctoral student after a brief stint at another university to complete my Master's of Science degree. I then went on to finish my doctoral research with a comparative psychologist, Suzanne MacDonald. Whereas Silverman's research was entirely within the human realm, MacDonald's research was entirely within the non-human realm, although many of the topics overlap. This experience of working with two evolutionarily-minded academics broadened my interests and provided me with an invaluable learning experience.

Working under their supervision was pleasurable, and interacting with their other students was easy. For instance, Silverman's students had relatively similar backgrounds, areas of interest, and we shared the experience of being treated as misfits by the department at large. I am not implying that we were treated poorly, but rather that I continually sensed that the other students had a difficult time ascertaining exactly to which area we belonged. I was asked on occasion, "How could someone publish in a social psychological journal when they also publish in a human evolution journal?"

I must digress slightly and state that I feel that my situation was a rather uncommon one. I have a mate who is also an academic but in a different field than I. As budding graduate students, we were well aware that solving the "two body problem" (i.e., finding academic positions in the same location) was going to be extremely difficult. We immediately made a pact to be as prepared as possible before hitting the job application process. By doing so, we would hopefully improve our chances of landing a job either at the same institution, or at least within a commutable distance. I can unequivocally state that this agreement inspired me to publish as early, and as frequently, as possible.

I realize that "wanting" to publish does not necessarily lead to publications, but it does lead one to seize opportunities. Thus, there I was, a graduate student with a deeply rooted motivation to perform publishable research, when I received an email disseminated by the department's secretary. The message originated from Martin Voracek in Vienna, who was seeking cross-cultural collaborators for a research project. I replied to the advertisement, outlining my interests in EP and asked for further information. This initial contact led to a blizzard of correspondence, producing over the following years several articles and letters in a wide variety of journals and spanning a range of topics. It was a sincerely enjoyable time for me, because while I was conducting my dissertation research, I had found a way to collaborate and publish on new research topics. During the day, I would work full-

time on my dissertation research, and then at night and during the weekends, I worked on my “other” projects whenever I was able. I fully believe that working via email with Voracek helped my academic career immensely, as it provided me with an arsenal of papers to use while applying for jobs. But, more importantly to me but perhaps less so to an employer, it taught me about experimental design and statistics with which I can more successfully conduct my own research.

My mate finished his doctoral degree a year before I. Together we decided the best approach to his job application process was for him to pepper his applications across the country. We hoped that he would have a few prospective job offers, and then we could narrow the decision to the institution that would also be most likely to hire an evolutionary psychologist. One university interviewed him almost immediately upon receiving his application, and offered him a tenure-track position which he accepted.

When I began to near the end of my doctoral studies, I scoured the academic “wanted” advertisements by reading *University Affairs* (a publication distributed by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada) and systematically searching university web pages. Soon after, there was an advertisement for the Department of Psychology at St. Mary’s University in Halifax. Although the advertisement declared that the department was only seeking candidates with research in the areas of occupational health or industrial psychology, I applied for the position.

Selecting the reprints/preprints to submit was not difficult. I had previously decided that I only wanted to be at an institution that was amicable to both evolutionary-based psychological research and work that pertained to sexuality. The articles I chose were focussed on female intrasexual competition, women’s mate preferences for “dads” versus “cads,” Playboy centerfolds, and female pornography actresses. This decision was my way of weeding out places that would stifle my research interests and not allow me to pursue novel lines of inquiry. I elected to be candid in my cover letter, stating that I would be interested in teaching the more “science-based” courses, such as EP, Drugs and Behavior, Human Sexuality, and so forth.

The chair of the department contacted me a few weeks later and requested that I be interviewed. The two-day interview process was quite tiring, but I was amazed with the warmth I observed among the faculty. Three days after my interview, I was offered a tenure-track position. To my surprise, the faculty members were quite knowledgeable about the field, and asked well-informed questions. Several of them offered me ideas to follow-up the research I had presented during my job-talk, and there was a genuine interest in having an evolutionary-based social psychologist join their ranks.

It might strike a reader, especially one from Europe, that it is a bit odd that although many academics gain post-doctoral experience before seeking employment, it is not always necessary to do so, at least within Canada and in psychology. That said, many of my non-EP colleagues do engage in post-doctoral appointments before applying for permanent positions, so it likely depends on numerous factors including

the individual's publication record, her/his area of research, the school to which they are applying, and the market of available academics within that particular year. Obviously, I cannot predict the shape of my career, the directions of my research, or how events will progress. In the meantime, however, I am glad that I have found a position at an institution which is accepting of my interests.

Daniel J. Kruger

I am honored to be asked to document "how I made it as an evolutionary psychologist," as I consider my career to be a work in progress. My first brush with evolutionary social science was when I came across a well worn copy of E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology*, in my small hometown public library of all places, when looking up literature for my undergraduate thesis on psychotropic medication. I also read Jared Diamond's *The Third Chimpanzee* for a Biology course, but I was never made aware that the evolutionary approach to social science was thriving and expanding as a field. Of course, this was before the arrival of the Internet as we know it; so hopefully discovering the field is much easier today.

I attended graduate school in a Social Psychology program (and school for that matter) with no active evolutionary researchers. In my first term, I took a Social Development course where each student gave a class lecture based on a list of topics. I was immediately intrigued by "Evolutionary Psychology." I had an idea of what EP might be, but I did not anticipate the broad range of topics that could be covered. I gave a lecture on sex differences in cognitive and social development. After exploring the evolutionary literature, I found that the evolutionary framework was the first (and only) psychological meta-theory that made sense to me.

I became the token voice of the evolutionary perspective in my department. A few of my peers were curious about this approach, some were openly hostile, and most were indifferent. The opponents appeared to be driven by their political stances, and reacted mainly to the implications they (inaccurately) perceived that EP would have. Although the faculty did not join in our heated discussions that sometimes emerged at colloquia, they were supportive of this exchange of ideas and never discouraged my interests. I remember giving a presentation for Sigma Xi where many of the attendees were biologists. My talk was on sex differences in the antecedents of jealousy, and it appeared that the audience was as captivated by my talk as I was by the talks on the minutiae of non-organic chemical reactions. I was somewhat surprised by this lukewarm reception, because I assumed that those in the life sciences would be interested in evolutionary issues. Perhaps they already assumed that psychologists would be informed by evolutionary theory. They may also have specialized in areas that are far removed from testing evolutionary hypotheses.

My initial evolutionary research projects were in altruism, helping, and cooperation. I ran a study on gender specificity in domains of nepotism, the results of which became my second conference presentation. I followed this study with my master's thesis research on cognitive features predicted from inclusive fitness theory,

and eventually attempted to integrate the social psychological and evolutionary models of altruistic helping intentions in my dissertation project. I was fortunate to have a graduate program director who was sympathetic to the evolutionary perspective, and also found a comparative psychologist from a school that was absorbed by mine and was somewhat estranged from the rest of the department. I also collaborated on non-evolutionary research in basic and applied social psychology and community psychology.

At the psychology conferences I first attended, the evolutionary perspective was rare, but it appears to be increasing in popularity today. I was delighted to see how prominently EP and its critics were represented at the 2004 meeting of the American Psychological Society (APS). My presentations at regional psychological conferences are still sometimes grouped into the (non-human) animal cognition section. I am glad that the program committees found my talk worthy, although it is unfortunate that there were no more appropriate sections in the programs.

At the second American Psychological Association (APA) convention that I attended, I had the good fortune to spot Steven Pinker walking down the hall. I jokingly asked him when there would be an APA division for EP. He laughed and told me about HBES. My first experience at HBES was amazing; here were so many others who were thinking “on the same wavelength” as I did. I met many interesting people, and was delighted how cordial the well known (famous, even) researchers and authors were. It was a captivating experience and I have not missed a meeting since.

At my first HBES, I asked around where I could get a post-doc in EP. Such a position did not exist at the time. When I went on the job market two years later, I was excited to see openings in the Psychosocial Epidemiology research training program at the University of Michigan, which included Randolph Nesse on the faculty. Fortunately for me, Nesse remembered our conversation at HBES and I was accepted into the program. Although the program has an emphasis on health disparities caused by social factors, and I was already familiar with the research methodologies presented, this position provided me with a wonderful opportunity to construct a virtual post-doc in evolutionary social science. I collaborated with Nesse on a number of evolutionary projects and was able to attend whole seminars given by Richard Alexander, Scott Atran, Bobbi Low, Randolph Nesse, and Beverly Strassmann, as well as numerous lectures by other faculty and guests. The Evolution and Human Adaptation Program brings in accomplished researchers for nearly weekly lectures and covers a different theme each term. Given the high concentration of evolutionary researchers and events, the extensive university resources, and the abundant “fringe benefits” of living in Ann Arbor, this was probably the best track I could have taken.

At the end of my two year post-doc, I felt like there was still so much more to be done, so I obtained a research position in the School of Public Health. In addition to maintaining my ties with the university and continuing research collaborations, I am hoping this will be a productive venue for evolutionary life history research.

Traditional subject pool experiments are not incredibly helpful for testing life history hypotheses due to the constricted socioeconomic, age, motivational, etc. ranges of introductory psychology students here. I hope to integrate these hypotheses into multifaceted projects investigating a much more diverse community population.

I have to say that being an evolutionary psychologist probably did not influence the decision to hire me. Although my publication record informed my new colleagues of my theoretical interests, I believe they were more attracted to my research skills and compatibility with their current and anticipated projects. My “other” research experiences were very valuable in this case. So once again, rather than finding a position that is already a perfect match for my aspirations, I chose a situation that appears to have excellent prospects. If I were to hear about my current life (academic and otherwise) ten years ago, I would be amazed. I hope to continue with my modest contributions to the field.

Steven Platek

I think we have all experienced it; every undergraduate course we take (for me at Rutgers University in Camden, NJ) uses a text that “covers” evolutionary theory (or sociobiology in the really old texts) in about a paragraph, two if you were lucky. It seemed that from the outset I was being trained, convinced, and pressured into believing that evolutionary biology had nothing to add to the growing discipline of “scientific psychology.” This was contrary to everything I had ever read or learned about evolutionary biology and felt very uncomfortable. As a consequence, I would always ask professors to elaborate on those few paragraphs as best they could. However, none were all that learned and most denied EP without even giving good reasons, and then quickly moving on to different topics. It felt very much like being a child and receiving the quintessential “because I said so” from a parent figure. “Why don’t psychologists think evolution has anything to do with human psychology?” asks the student. “Because I said so!” said the standard social scientist.

I did not care much though. I was not even interested in “scientific psychology.” I was going to be a clinical psychologist, a therapist (yes, shocking for any of those who know me well). It was not until I enrolled in a distance-learning course co-taught by Bill Whitlow (at Rutgers) and V. S. Ramachandran (at UCSD). This course turned me onto cognitive neuroscience, and Bill Whitlow was interested in brain evolution. I then left for graduate school to study behavioral neuroendocrinology, which for reasons better left unsaid did not work out. I went to the Biopsychology Section Head, Gordon Gallup Jr.’s office, to let him know that things were bad for me at SUNY-Albany and I was leaving. For those of you who have never had the opportunity to meet Gordon (likely because he is busy on his cattle farm), you are certainly missing out. Not only is he brilliant, but persuasive, and cares about students’ well-being more than any professor I have ever met. He is also a veritable database of knowledge on as many things as the Encyclopedia Britannica, not just psychology. (I often tell my students I learned as much about

cows in graduate school as I did about psychology.) Over a period of two hours Gallup convinced me (looking back, he did not have to do much) that quitting grad school was a terrible thing to do – what he had failed to tell me was that it was not nearly as terrible as being labeled an Evolutionary Psychologist! I soon became one and that afternoon I received my scarlet letters ‘EP.’ I instantly began reading and talking about EP and the power of the theory to my other professors, but none wanted to hear it, not even the biologists or geneticists, as they called themselves! In fact, at SUNY-Albany, if you were an evolutionary psychologist in the Biopsychology Section you might have just as well been dirt! It was not only in the department that I encountered these feelings toward EP, however. At regional conferences such as Eastern Psychological Association my fellow EP graduate students and I would put on our scarlet letters and present our research. We would unwittingly meet with adversaries at every poster and paper session we were part of. As I contemplated my becoming a member of a faction outcast by its own discipline I pondered what to do – Gallup’s (and I imagine many mentors mantra, as it is now mine as well) was “publish or perish!” Well, as an evolutionary psychologist nothing could be more important. “Dazzle them with data,” Gallup would say to us. So I was off working long hours, late nights, designing studies, analyzing data, writing, writing, writing. Did I mention I was writing? (Thank goodness for an understanding and atheistic evolutionary-thinking mate, now wife.) I was also traveling to conferences on EP. It was a trip (36 hour train ride) to The Nebraska Symposium on Motivation (a wonderful conference if you get the chance) that made me say to myself “I want to be Martin Daly when I grow up!” From that point on, I embraced EP and decided I was not going to pussy foot around my department or any conferences any longer.

Three years later, when I went to apply for jobs I was forced to come out of my EP shell and see the psychological world for what it really was – and it was not evolutionary-friendly. Perusing the APA, APS, and Chronicle of Higher Education Jobs ads was daunting. I only found one job that advertised for an evolutionary psychologist at University of Texas, Austin. I was fortunate enough that someone gave me great advice – “nothing ventured, nothing gained.” In other words, adopt the shotgun approach and apply to several places, even if they do not sound like a perfect fit. That is precisely what I did; I applied to several places all of which were searching for behavioral neuroscience, biopsychology, psychobiology types; only one was searching for an evolutionary psychologist. I was not shy on my application materials about my perspective, even titling my statement of research “Evolutionary Cognitive Neuroscience.” I figured I would let the potential employers know up front and let them sort things out. What I learned was that the word evolutionary often goes unnoticed, or perhaps misunderstood – not all that different from what I had read in psychology text books when I had first embarked on my career as a psychologist. I received several interviews for positions where it was clear they did not understand, nor like evolutionary psychology. In fact, at one interview they even asked me with great surprise: “you are an evolutionary psychologist?” But it was these uncomfortable interviews that helped me hone in on those that meant something, that

were potentially very good positions. Ultimately I was wavering between two assistant professor positions that I liked – jobs that offered an equal balance between research and teaching. I chose Drexel because during my “job talk,” which was only tangentially related to evolution (the topic was “The Neuropsychology of Self-Awareness”) I was asked to talk about my interests in evolutionary/comparative psychology. (It also does not hurt that Drexel is in Philadelphia, near all my and my wife’s kin). The faculty and administration actually encouraged my interests in the topic. I was sold.

My story sounds much like a roller coaster and every student will experience different things while trying to find their dream job, make it as an evolutionary psychologist, or simply get hired somewhere that lets them conduct the research that interests them. But when all is said and done, as a still developing and learning evolutionary psychologist myself, I do not think students should hide behind their scarlet letters. Students need to stay honest to their discipline of EP. It is only through this approach that we will ever really understand human/animal behavior; you do not want to work for or with people who disagree. In an academic survival of the fittest, I believe that those who do not adhere to the evolutionary model will be left in the dust.

I now train undergraduate and clinical PhD students and I do not leave out the evolutionary perspective; in fact I emphasize it very strongly. I challenge undergraduates to think about psychology in a new way, and I challenge clinical PhD students to think about psychopathology in a different, adaptive way. So far, this approach has worked for me, and most of all, it is very satisfying. I now proudly consider myself an evolutionary cognitive neuroscientist.

Catherine Salmon

My long and winding road to an academic job did not seem odd at the time, it all felt very natural. I was an undergraduate at McMaster University in biology. Having been given a copy of Dawkins’ *Blind Watchmaker* as a prize for my performance in biology at high school, my interests were unsurprisingly in the areas of evolutionary ecology and genetics. My life changing moment came when I took Martin Daly’s undergraduate course in EP. The idea of using the theories I had learned in animal behavior to study human behavior was captivating and I was hooked. When the opportunity arose for me to go to graduate school and be a part of the Martin Daly and Margo Wilson lab group, I jumped at the chance. So for good or bad, I can claim Daly was responsible!

Before I go on, I must also say that I think my experiences in that lab really made a difference for me in getting hired in the sense that they encouraged (despite the occasional head shake) my rather wide-ranging interests. And being in a setting with so many people working on radically different research made me not only less narrow in my own work but also gave me a very broad base when I started teaching EP as a post-doctoral fellow. It also gave me opportunities not only to discuss

research with other students but also the opportunity to collaborate on work with them.

While my PhD work focused on issues such as birth order and parental investment, Daly and Wilson encouraged me to explore my interests in female sexuality and the media, which led to a co-authored book being published just after I received my PhD. Initially, when I talked to Daly about doing an independent project on erotica, he suggested working with someone outside our own university who would have research experience and interest in the area. He suggested Don Symons and after many emails (and an initial heads-up one to Symons from Daly) we set up a research project over email that led several years later to the publication of *Warrior Lovers*.

Back to the nature of labels...I have never marketed myself as anything but an evolutionary psychologist. In fact, before I went to graduate school, the only psychology course I had taken was EP. In my case, there was nothing to do but wear "the mark of death" proudly. I am an evolutionary psychologist and that is really the only kind of psychologist I can claim to be. This made my job searching post PhD a long process, as I looked for the right place to be, a place very open to EP if not one advertising outright for that sort of position. Sometimes it is not always clear how an institution will respond to EP, even if they indicate an openness in the job description, because there may not be agreement among faculty in the department about what exactly they are looking for in a new position. Some faculty may be very keen; some may view you as the anti-Christ (no pun intended). Unfortunately, that is hard to determine before you actually go there for an interview. Of course, once you are there, it will become very obvious! Basically, I kept my eyes open for places where there was no obvious hostility (as seen in papers written by the faculty there) and ones where EP was explicitly mentioned in the job ad. It is important to note that there are not a ton of jobs that fit this description each year. So my experience was that the job market was tight, and that even when I got an interview, the fit between myself and the institution was not always right.

During this time, I had two post-doctoral fellowships at Simon Fraser University, one funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada and the second funded by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR). While in Vancouver, I worked in Charles Crawford's lab which was a wonderful experience and really the place where my interest in health research developed. Initially, I was continuing my birth order research (funded by SSHRC) and that work went well but I soon found myself intrigued with Crawford's theories concerning the possible connection between reproductive suppression and eating disorders. I began to get involved in this research and managed to get a projected funded for two years by the MSFHR looking into the impact of various images of women in the media on women's body image. In the end, I believe being able to connect evolutionary and health psychology made a difference in my getting hired in my current position.

Today, I am an assistant professor at the University of Redlands, a liberal arts

university half way between Los Angeles and Palm Springs. It has a small psychology department and when they were hiring for my position, they were looking for a person to fill several roles. They included interests in evolutionary and health psychology, a good fit for my own interests. And as a liberal arts institution, they focus a lot of teaching, which I had been doing part-time over my four years of post-doc work, and on interdisciplinary interests (such as the interface of EP and media and literature studies). As well, I had published a fair number of papers on my birth order work as well as my co-authored book on sexuality and erotica, an article on mismatch theory and health, numerous book chapters, and a book co-edited with Charles Crawford that was in press at the time of my job interview at Redlands.

I certainly felt that I was well-prepared by the time I interviewed at Redlands, and in fact, I had several interviews that year at other institutions as well. I never hid my EP label and in fact only sought out EP oriented positions. Whether that strategy is the best one...for me, I am sure it was. I am what I am, like it or not, and I am not good at pretending to be anything else. Anyone who reads my curriculum vitae can see that an evolutionary psychologist is what I am. If I was giving advice to others still at graduate school, I might encourage them to publish in more mainstream psychology journals if their research would fit well within those boundaries (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, for example, or Cognition if your work is in that area). Universities with faculty in those areas tend to place a lot of weight on those big name journals. But above all else, publish, publish, publish. Early and often is the way to go, and show that you are a productive scholar. If at all possible, do not just publish on one topic, especially just one research question over and over again. Show a breadth of interest and knowledge.

I never considered my status as an evolutionary psychologist the “mark of death.” It did not stop me from finding a great place to work, I was hired to teach a new generation of students about EP and health psychology (which my students are finding means Darwinian medicine) and there are no restrictions on my research interests, I am free to work on whatever captures my interest. In one year, I have had a student go off to graduate school to study health psychology with a solid Darwinian background and a new honors student who wants to go on to do a PhD in EP. There is not much more I could ask for.

Discussion

Although the four of us have different experiences in terms of graduate school and supervision, each of us found it remarkable how much similarity existed in our tales.

It is clear that we fully believe that we have acquired our positions due to a diligent effort to publish before searching the academic “wanted” advertisements. The importance of publishing cannot be overstated, and supervisors should foster the spirit of publishing in their students from the undergraduate level onward. Students cannot simply enter the academic publishing world without guidance and training, so

the role of the supervisor is imperative. Several approaches can be taken to help students to publish successfully. For example, supervisors could establish a laboratory project where all students participate as researchers and receive authorship. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that students are encouraged to offer valuable contributions and not merely technical assistance or data collection. When offers for collaboration are received, supervisors could involve their students, hence providing them training in research, but also perhaps allowing them to earn authorship. Supervisors may encourage students to present a research project at a conference, and then lead them through the process of turning the talk into a short article. There are numerous ways of promoting student publishing as a supervisor, and the dividends are worth the effort. It is important to note that we are not endorsing that supervisors simply provide authorship to students; rather, students should be given every opportunity to learn the process of publishing. Providing unwarranted authorship to students, by adding their name without reason for example, prohibits students from learning and engaging in the process.

Students cannot merely rely on their supervisors to get them to publish. If they are interested in pursuing an academic position or employment where publication may be of benefit, they should make this goal clear to their supervisor. Moreover, we believe that students should aim to have broad interests and be able to work in various areas. For example, perhaps a student could expand a paper from a comparative psychology course and try to publish it, or transform it into a conference submission, even if it is only a student-based journal or conference. Perhaps, while completing a comprehensive or breadth requirement for their degree, they could seek placement in an alternative setting which may lead to an interesting collaboration.

A second point of agreement among us is that one approach may be for students to market themselves as not only evolutionary psychologists, but to also embrace another area. So, for example, one of us considers herself an evolutionary social psychologist, while another considers himself an evolutionary cognitive neuroscientist. Our interdisciplinary approach has allowed for us to speak and collaborate with others who are not directly trained or well read in evolutionary-based areas. Perhaps it enables academic institution hiring committees to feel less at risk, as though hiring an exclusively evolutionary psychologist would be too much of a gamble. Be creative and flexible with your roles; see them as a path rather than an outcome.

It may also be useful for students to attempt to translate their work into terms that are familiar to most psychologists (or in any field your colleagues are active). Do not hide the evolutionary foundations for hypotheses, but be able to say that that the study was on “what people find attractive in long- and short-term relationship partners” rather than on “proximate and ultimate influences in mating strategies.” When encountering critics, try to understand their objections, and it may be the case that their concerns are based on misunderstandings (e.g., EP is genetic determinism, a justification for sexism). If disagreements are theoretical, try to persuade critics with data. It can also be surprisingly effective to have a good sense of humor and to not

take attacks personally.

We additionally recommend that students attend conferences, even if they are not able to present any research. Conferences are an excellent way to keep informed of the latest progress of the field, to generate new avenues for future research, to establish collaborations, and to network with peers and colleagues. Establishing collaborations is a valuable asset for students, because it enables them to gain alternative perspectives and new methodologies. As well, it is then possible for students to ask for letters of recommendation from others outside of their immediate university, and to potentially seek employment from them in the future (e.g., supervision of their postdoctoral studies).

Each of us also mentioned the importance of selecting a suitable position. Perhaps due to our feelings of exclusion in our graduate days or at mainstream conferences, we naturally sought environments that were open to our research perspectives. We all sensed, at some level, the gravity of this decision and carefully considered the relative openness of the institutions. It is interesting to note that this situation is apparently unique to EP (or at least evolutionary-based disciplines). Evolutionary theory has been, on a continual basis, the source of debate and anti-evolutionists (i.e., creationists) lobby for it to be removed from the educational curriculum.

Our reflections are limited to our own personal experiences, and so we are able to only talk about the situations we have faced and how we have navigated our ways to employment. As with predictions in general, it is difficult to tell where we are heading, and it should not be inferred from our reflections that we are at the ends of our stories. We are just beginning our adventures, and hope that our recollections have assisted students and supervisors to feel more confident that they should seek their own paths.

This experience report is further limited in that we have all received our training in Canada or the United States, and it is highly probable that students in other countries would have different stories to tell. All of us have, at some point in our academic development, learnt about conferences such as the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) and the International Society for Human Ethology (ISHE), whereas there are probably students who have no idea that such societies exist. Therefore, our experiences reflect only a very small sample of all possible student experiences, and must be viewed as such.

At the same time, however, each of us has undergone a unique journey to arrive to our current position. One of us relocated to a different country; another of us completed graduate school without a supervisor involved in EP. Two of us sought and obtained an academic position immediately, one of us is involved in a non-traditional academic role, while another of us completed two postdoctoral positions before her professorial placement. We are also different with respect to our interests; together we span topics that include neuroimaging, anorexia, suicide, pornography, Darwinian literary criticism, mortality, and attractiveness. All of us, however, feel that we have made our training as evolutionary psychologists work for us, rather than

against us, and never regret the path we have chosen. As evolutionists, we realize that a diversity of strategies is probably better than a monoculture.

Our closing message for students and supervisors is to not despair. There are many institutions which are open to EP, although they may not explicitly be hiring people as such. We feel it is essential to present a total package; a candidate with widely developed interests who has published as often as possible and in the best journals as possible. This strategy has worked for us.

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