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What does your research focus on?

I dance around a lot of different research areas, but most of them are somehow connected to metacognition, judgment and decision making. How does what we think we know, (and how we think we think) influence the way we make decisions?

What drew you to this line of research? Why is it exciting to you?

I wish I had better metacognition about what draws me to these sorts of projects. Really, I just do whatever projects grab my attention. At any given moment, there rarely seems to be any connection between the different projects I'm working on. But when I look back in hindsight there do seem to be common themes. Which just goes to show that metacognition is flawed (which is good, because that's what my research suggests…).

Who were/are your mentors or psychological influences?

I started making a list, but when I hit 50 names and hadn't gotten near the end I realized it was a doomed exercise. There have been so many people who have been invaluable in this regard that I can't possibly list them all. I'll single out Bobbie Spellman, because she's not only a great source of inspiration, but also a great source of chocolate.

To what do you attribute your success in the science?

Great mentors, a willingness to take on risky projects, an appreciation for converging evidence, and chocolate milkshakes.

What's your future research agenda?

I plan on continuing to do research on whatever interesting projects catch my eye. That seems to be moving me more towards causal reasoning these days, but ask me again in 6 months and I'd probably say something different.

Any advice for even younger psychological scientists? What would you tell someone just now entering graduate school or getting their PhD?

Being critical of research is easy. The challenging (but important part) is being able to glean the good out of a flawed project. That means being able to learn from papers, even those with serious shortcomings. It means being open to research in areas that don't on the surface seem like they'll be interesting or relevant. And crucially, it means applying that same mindset to your own research. Often times the most interesting data sets are the ones that *don't* support your hypothesis — that means there's an open question waiting to be solved. You can (and should) learn something from every paper you read, every talk you attend, and every study you run, even if it's something different than what you were expecting (or hoping for).

What publication are you are most proud of or feel has been most important to your career?

My very first publication was accepted without revision. Since then I've never had any paper so well received by the reviewers. But starting my career with such positive feedback really bolstered my confidence (had my first publication been one with 5 cycles of R&R — which I've also had — I would probably have been much less motivated).