

PARTNERSHIP

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I admire anyone who has ever submitted a manuscript to *Partnership* or any one of the other 2,991 active library and information sciences journals currently listed in Ulrich's Serials Directory. I would like to use this, my last editorial as Editor-in-Chief, to salute you, the contributors.

Publishing takes time, energy, and focus. More than that, it takes guts. It takes guts to decide that library scholarship matters enough to devote your time, energy, and focus to it. It takes guts to stay engaged with a research question from conception to completion. It takes guts to do the hard work of research and writing. It takes guts to believe that you have something worthwhile to contribute. It takes guts to risk rejection.

We all struggle with different parts of the research and writing process. For me, research and writing itself is a joy; reckoning with the question of whether or not I have anything meaningful to contribute is the part that paralyzes me. No sooner does a research idea occur to me, I find reasons to dismiss it as trivial, tired, or too ambitious for my talents and time. When I read other people's research my reaction is often either "Why didn't I think of that?" or "I've thought about that! Why didn't I have the guts to explore it?"

I recently experienced the same paralysis of self-doubt in an improv class. There is a strange paradox in the art of improvising. You have to manage to be grounded and present while letting your imagination go wild. As a novice improviser, I often find myself frozen, my mind a complete blank. I can neither respond simply and naturally to my scene partner nor think of anything remotely interesting or creative to say or do. When I watch my improv colleagues perform, I find myself asking the same questions I ask myself when I read other people's research: "Why didn't I think of that?" or "I've thought about that! Why didn't I have the guts to explore it?"

"Commit to the scene" is one of the few rules of improv. A scene starts with the germ of an idea. No matter how insignificant or rehashed the idea may seem at first, the improviser never rejects it out of hand, but cultivates it to try to make it bloom. This takes patience, commitment, and guts. Some ideas will bloom bigger and brighter than others, but there is no way of knowing in advance which ideas will take.

Perhaps this analogy will help some of us reluctant researchers push our ideas a little bit further before giving up. There's a whole lot more to rigorous research than the germ of an idea, but it has to start somewhere.

As Editor-in-Chief of this journal I've enjoyed the pleasure (and safety) of seeing other people's work come to fruition. As I step down from this role, maybe I will find the guts to contribute in a new way: as an author.