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Dipping a toe in the academic pond

Stuart E. Mirvis, MD, FACR

As a junior faculty member back in the day, I was expected to write papers targeted at the major scientific radiology journals. While I received my share of acceptance letters, there was never a shortage of concurrent requests for revisions that I was “encouraged” to make. Sometimes, of course, my articles were rejected outright.

While I was appreciative and quite aware of the effort that went into reviewing papers, what I did not appreciate were the harsh criticisms that often accompanied some of these reviews. I know that I was hardly alone.

I have always believed one can be constructively critical, yet still positive, in a review. Successfully submitting papers for publication is not easy, particularly for writers in the early stages of their career. I thought that the review procedure, while sometimes leading to rejection, did not at the same time need to be discouraging; this being particularly important for the novice author.

I have seen many residents and fellows over the years who would not attempt an academic career out of fear of not having articles published and failing to ascend the academic ranks. More positive experiences with writing papers might stimulate some to make the effort.

I do not believe that articles should be held to less rigorous standards because the first-time author is a novice. Still, I think it worth-

while for articles written by relatively junior authors to have a home in a widely read publication not subject to the rigorous reviews of scientific papers. The experience of seeing one's articles in print can have a very uplifting effect on one's desire to make further attempts at writing papers.

As a reader of *Applied Radiology* you may note that we specifically do not publish scientific papers. Instead, we publish at least two review articles each month from major universities. Most of these are solicited by invitation only, but we encourage the primary authors to be junior staff members with relatively limited experience in writing, editing, and publishing in the literature. A senior faculty member is ultimately responsible for the contents of the paper. These papers are well written, thorough, appropriately referenced, and generously illustrated.

The papers are reviewed by myself and in some cases by a board member with expertise in the specialization, as needed. I believe from the feedback I have received over many years that our format is valuable to readers and is primarily responsible for the success of *Applied Radiology*.

It is my hope that the greater potential for less experienced authors to contribute to this enterprise will offer some encouragement to more seriously consider academic careers.

To my fellow reviewers, this is also a very good opportunity to apply the Golden Rule.

Dr. Mirvis is the Editor-in-Chief of *Applied Radiology*, and Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD.