

# SSP\_Podcast Ep 6\_20201201\_GB Transcript

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## SPEAKERS

Meredith Adinolfi, Adya Misra, Vicky Truter, Sai Konda

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### Meredith Adinolfi 00:06

Welcome to episode six of SSP's Early Career Publishing Podcast. This is Meredith, coming to you once again from my home in Boston. For those of you who are new to the podcast, this series aims to serve all facets of the scholarly publishing industry by bringing together insight, advice, and guidance from leaders and experts in the field. Today's episode will sound a little different because my co-host, Sara, is currently on maternity leave. We miss her and wish her and her family all the best, and we look forward to having her back here soon. In our previous episodes, we featured interviews with experienced professionals who have offered a wealth of insight and guidance. Today, we have a panel of publishing professionals who are earlier in their careers and will share their experiences from their first few years in the industry and from taking part in SSP's mentorship and fellowship programs. The idea to have this panel came about during some recent conversations about the New Generations Fund that SSP recently launched in support of its very popular fellowship and mentorship programs. SSP really believes in the power of these programs to support and engage the next generation of scholarly professionals. So this fund has been developed to provide sustainable funding so that these can be offered freely and widely to SSP members and can continue growing and evolving as they have been. When we post this episode, we will also include a link in the accompanying Scholarly Kitchen post to more information on the Generations Fund. So you can check that out if you want to find out more about the fund or the programs it supports which we'll be talking a lot about today. With that, let's get right into introductions for our three panelists. Our first panelist is Vicky Truter from Taylor & Francis. Having her as a panelist is a special treat also because she is the producer on this podcast series and does a lot of work to make these episodes possible. Also with us we have Sai Konda from the American Chemical Society, and Adya Misra from PLOS. So let's just start by having you each introduce yourselves briefly and tell us a little bit about your roles. Vicky, do you want to start?

### Vicky Truter 02:01

Sure. At the moment, I'm an Open Access Portfolio Manager at Taylor & Francis. I provide a portfolio development and support role to subject specialist teams on our journals portfolio, specifically in the subject areas of the humanities and social sciences, the physical sciences

and engineering, and also the behavioral sciences.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 02:27  
Okay, shall we move on to Adya?

**A** Adya Misra 02:29  
So I'm a Senior Editor at PLOS Medicine. I currently handle quite a few sections at the journal. I handle obesity, diabetes, endocrinology, and oncology. And my main job is to handle submissions from the start to the end. And if they're published beyond. That's, that's kind of the core aspect of what I do. And in addition to that, I curate the medicine blog that we have at PLOS. It's called Speaking of Medicine. And I also handle our journal Twitter account.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 03:05  
Great, thank you. And last but not least, Sai.

**S** Sai Konda 03:09  
Thank you, Meredith. Yeah, I'm a Senior Managing Editor at the American Chemical Society. I manage seven journals in the physical chemistry and the nanoscience portfolio. My main oversight is the strategic and content management of the journals, and also monitoring the financial health of the portfolio. And in addition to that, I also manage a group of managing and development editors at the ACS and who help me in overseeing this whole entire portfolio.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 03:35  
Great, thank you all for that. Sai, since we have you talking maybe I'll start with you on this next one. I'm just wondering if each of you can tell us how you first got involved with SSP and when that was.

**S** Sai Konda 03:47  
Sure, actually, my story is a funny one. The way I got started with SSP this was - so I had joined ACS back in 2016, which was also my first job in the publishing industry. And I had transitioned from academia with a PhD and postdoctoral background. And so when I heard about local networking/happy hour in Washington, D.C., I thought maybe I should go and introduce myself, and hopefully meet some people in the professional network. And it was in a bar in D.C. And it turned out that I had met some very important people who even today continue to play a critical role in my professional development. Beyond that, my formal association with SSP began when I was awarded the Early Career Fellowship in 2017. And I had also, at the same time started volunteering with the Early Career Subcommittee. And that's how things got

started where I went to the first annual meeting as an early career fellow, and then continued to volunteer on the Early Career Subcommittee, and it's been a very good journey since then. I would say I've picked on multiple roles, but maybe we can come to it at a later point.

V

Vicky Truter 05:00

I feel like our experiences are very similar, Sai. With regard to SSP and how we got started. I think it was around 2018 that a colleague forwarded on SSP's call for fellowship applications, which mentioned specifically SSP's interest in assessing applications from regions other than the US and the UK, which encouraged me since I'm based in South Africa. And I was accepted to that program. And part of that was an expectation that all fellows contribute to one of SSP's committees. So I, like Sai, signed up to the Early Career Subcommittee. I've been part of that ever since.

S

Sai Konda 05:45

So, if I can add a second story to this. So, in 2018, I was lucky enough to be co-chairing the Early Career Subcommittee, when Meredith was the co-chair for the Career Development Committee of which the ECSC or the Early Career Subcommittee was a part of, and I remember actually reaching out to Vicky with an email saying, would you be interested, I see that you've picked Early Career Subcommittee as an option, would you be interested in joining us? So it's good that we've kept in touch through all these years, and we had an interesting beginning, like Vicky said.

V

Vicky Truter 06:19

Yeah, that's very cool. And I am now one of the co-chairs of this subcommittee.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 06:25

You guys are highlighting something that I think is really important about these programs and SSP in general, which is once you get involved, there's so many things you can do. And you sort of can quickly build on what your participation has been if you're interested in obviously forming a lot of really nice connections. So how about you Adya? Did you have a similar experience getting involved?

A

Adya Misra 06:46

Actually, no, I was just thinking, my experience couldn't have been more different. I was completely blissfully unaware of SSP and mentoring programs and fellowship programs till towards the end of 2018, when someone in the company forwarded me some details about the mentoring program that was underway. And I thought, I'm actually - I've been in this industry for three years, and I don't really have any official mentoring or any clear plans of professional development. And I thought this might be a good opportunity for me to interact with somebody outside of PLOS. And find out how editors actually develop professionally, what's expected

outside of the traditional path that editors might follow. What do other people do in other organizations, etc. And, yeah, I joined SSP towards the end of 2018. I was part of the mentoring cohort, early last year. And this year, I'm part of SSP's UK-specific Engagement Committee, where we try and organize monthly meetups to engage with people who we wouldn't have met otherwise, and find out what they're up to over this crazy pandemic period.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 08:08

That's great. Those regional groups are so important right now, especially. Adya, you mentioned that you participated in the SSP mentorship program, can you just talk a little bit more about what that program is and what it entails?

A

Adya Misra 08:19

Yeah, so SSP have this mentoring program, which is open to everybody in publishing at any stage of their career, which makes it a little bit distinct from the fellowship program. And it's a nice opportunity for people to connect with one other person in the industry, and formulate a plan for the next six months. So if you have a certain goal that you might want to achieve with another person that might not be in your organization and get help, it's a really nice way to do that. I think, personally, I've noticed that people need mentoring sort of throughout their careers and this program really enables that. If you've been in the industry for three or four years, and you're feeling a little bit like you don't really know what comes next. So it's a great stepping stone to kind of speak to somebody who might have more experience and could help you with a completely unbiased view.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 09:17

Yeah, that's a great description. Thank you for that. The fellowship program, which Sai and Vicky took part in involves a mentorship component, but it is a bit different as a program so would one of you, either Sai or Vicky, like to talk a little bit more about what that program entails?

S

Sai Konda 09:33

Yeah, I can give a brief description. So each spring, SSP awards 12 students and early career professionals this fellowship. And applications are encouraged from students of publishing, librarianship, Information Science, and early career professionals in the first four years of employment in the scholarly publishing industry. The unique aspect I believe of the fellowship is receiving mentorship from an industry expert through this time, which typically lasts for a year, but in my case, at least, I have kept in touch with my mentor and it's gone beyond the one-year duration, but at least formally, that's the period of time you get to work with an industry expert. And at least in my time, when I got the fellowship, the journey began with meeting at the annual meeting, and then it went on for the full one year. But in the newer format, the one-year fellowship culminates at the annual meeting. So the fellows get to meet their mentors, figure out the different activities that are available to them, and then end with the participation of the annual meeting. And as fellows, we were also encouraged to volunteer

in different committees at SSP, at information events, and network. I think that's the biggest part is you get to network with a lot of industry professionals, and you also get to contribute in different ways. For example, fellows have done posters at the annual meeting, they have also contributed to the Scholarly Kitchen as part of the fellowship. So multiple opportunities, I think that's roughly what the program entails. Let me know if I missed something, Vicky.

V

Vicky Truter 11:08

I'm just having a think about that. You mentioned there is a mentorship component to the fellowship. So when I was a fellow, Meredith was actually my mentor. You know, we kept in touch since then. And when we started up the podcast for the Early Career Subcommittee, this very podcast that we're all in right now, I reached out to Meredith to see if she wanted to co-host, which I think is a really cool story. Apart from everything that you've already mentioned about the fellowship, in the year that I did it, all of the fellows also worked on a common project. We were basically constructing what we thought an ideal publishing scenario would be at all stages of publication, which was really a very interesting way to look at the industry that we were all quite newly involved in.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 12:03

Yeah, remember that project. And I think the idea with that was to think about the future of the industry through the eyes of people who were kind of just coming into it and had kind of a fresh view, and sort of could think about, what do we want this industry to look like as we go forward? And what's an ideal state, kind of, for all pieces of it. Very interesting project.

V

Vicky Truter 12:22

Yeah, I really enjoyed in that year, in particular, going to the, um, they were calls, I think, on a, if not a monthly basis, there might have been less regular than a monthly basis. But there were calls with professionals and experts in the field about how they had got to where they were in their career, which I thought was a really good and helpful aspect of the fellowship.

S

Sai Konda 12:48

I think Vicky mentions an important initiative that is still continuing today. So as part of my involvement with the Career Development Committee, I continue to work with the incoming class of fellows to give them opportunities, help them grow, just like how I have received opportunities for my professional development. And one of the events that Vicky mentioned is called the Leadership Academy, which was initiated by past president Adrian Stanley, where a board member or past board member, past president, or someone who's held leadership positions at SSP comes and speaks to the entire cohort of fellows, not just current, but also past, and they give their - they share their experience on how they have reached their career at this point, lessons they have learned, things that they could have done differently, what we can learn from their experiences. It's been a very interesting and useful learning experience to be a part of these calls and and learn from all these industry experts.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 13:51

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. One thing we haven't talked so much about is the fact that part of the fellowship program is attending the annual meeting and kind of having the other fellows in your cohort to experience the meeting with and I know that's been something we've heard a lot of feedback about that that's a really helpful sort of vehicle, as well as having your mentor, as I mentioned, that you meet at the meeting, but having sort of a group that you can kind of navigate the meeting with and figure out how to get the most out of the meeting. I think that's a really useful aspect of the program, too.

V

Vicky Truter 14:21

Oh, yeah. I think that, especially if you are really new to the industry, and you don't know anyone, it's quite hard to network, you know, even know how to approach networking. And so to already have a group of people that you have something in common with immediately is a huge help. It definitely was for me. I mean, I'm based in South Africa and publishing in this country, you know, it's - textbook publishing is the bread and butter. Research publishing is not such a big thing. There are only a few small publishers really that focus on it. I had no idea that there was such a huge community of scholarly publishers, in particular, out there, and for me to have the opportunity to go to the US was just amazing. It was totally eye opening.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 15:11

Yeah. I want to move on to talking a little bit about the goals that you had when you applied to either the fellowship or mentorship program. So Adya, I want to go to you for this one first. What were your goals as you applied to the mentorship program? And what were you hoping to get out of it?

A

Adya Misra 15:27

So as I mentioned before, I was - I had been in my job for about two and a half years when I had actually come across the mentoring program. And I was kind of interested in what comes next for somebody in my job. I'm sure everybody has already noticed there aren't that many editors who talk about their careers in public forums. There's not a clear path either. So I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to speak to somebody who has either done my job or known other people who've been editors and gone on to do other things in publishing. That was kind of my main focus at the time. By the time I actually matched with somebody, I had changed jobs within my company, which was a very interesting time to start talking to somebody outside of PLOS. Of course, the other main attraction for me was the possibility of networking with somebody who's doing a completely different job to me to understand what they do, and why they got into scholarly publishing.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 16:32

Yeah, that's interesting. I'm kind of curious. You had some specific ideas and goals going in. Was there anything that came about as part of your experience that you didn't expect that sort

of surprised you?

A

Adya Misra 16:43

What actually ended up happening was that the mentorship program became like a self-help program for me. I mean, I never thought of myself as somebody who struggled with quite a lot of confidence when it comes to networking or putting yourself out there for opportunities. And towards the end of the mentoring program, I felt like I could actually do that. I felt like I could just say yes, without feeling hesitant, or a little bit less confident. And I thought that was quite unexpected for myself.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 17:16

That's a great side effect, even though it wasn't one of your specific goals. That's great. So how about Sai or Vicky, either of you? What did you go into the fellowship program in mind as far as goals? And what were you hoping to get out of it?

V

Vicky Truter 17:30

I had been looking for a way to increase my experience in the industry. And the fellowship program kind of pushed me into doing that because of the expectation that I contribute to one of the committees. I like the fact that volunteering would mean that I could get involved with doing something that was very different to what my official role was at the time. Producing a podcast is very different to what my actual work entails, which used to be in production when I started at SSP and is now in open access editorial. Everything I'd hoped to get out of the program, I did. And more, definitely. I didn't expect there to be such a support network. I was just totally bowled over by the support that I got from the fellowship organizers. They were so engaged and had organized so much. I didn't expect that my participation in the fellowship would open other opportunities in the society itself. I kind of thought that I would join a committee, do a bit of volunteer work, and after a year, you know, which is the term of the - that the fellowship lasted... it's now been over two years, and I'm still, you know, part of - I'm still part of the committee. I'm now co-chair of the committee. I'm leading the podcast project team. And I definitely did not expect to be here. I would, I would definitely not have thought when I applied for the fellowship that I would've had the opportunity to do this.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 19:06

Well, speaking as your mentor, Vicky, I would like to take credit for some of that, but I really can't. So that's all you.

V

Vicky Truter 19:11

I think you definitely should, Meredith.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 19:14

Sai, do you have anything to add in terms of your goals for applying to the fellowship program? And then also whether you got anything out of it that you didn't expect?

S

Sai Konda 19:22

Yeah, sure. I think there are definitely common themes in terms of the motivations for applying to the fellowship. For me specifically, again, it was networking and the appeal of having an industry mentor guide you through the early years of being in the publishing industry, mainly because I transitioned from academia. I knew the publishing industry from a viewpoint of an author and a reviewer. I had no idea about the mechanism, the back end of things, like how everything worked. And so having a mentor, and being able to leverage their experience - so I should probably say my mentor, I was very lucky to have been assigned to Lauren Kane, who is the current president of SSP, who was phenomenal, I think, and played a very critical role in my professional development. And the unexpected part that came from this fellowship - and I think this is something very similar to what Vicky mentioned - again, is the amount of extended support network you have just beyond your mentor. What I ended up finding was that I could relate to several unofficial mentors, so to speak, as I got to meet more people at SSP. Adrian Stanley, past president, like I said, who I actually met for the first time at the networking event, and he was one of the people who encouraged me to apply for the fellowship as well. And I think even today, they continue to provide guidance and help and continue to play an active role. And what I definitely did not expect when I applied for the fellowship was the journey that it would lead me at this point, where, again, similar to Vicky, I went on to co-chair the Early Career Subcommittee, and I never thought that I would be asked to submit package for the Board of Directors election process, and I feel very lucky and, and humbled to be actually be elected to the Board of Directors. And Meredith is also a fellow board member who got elected this year. So I just find it gratifying that I get to serve my first year term in the Board of Directors under Lauren, who was my mentor. I should say, maybe she is my mentor, and also the current president at SSP. So it's been a very, very gratifying journey.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 21:40

That's a great story. I can imagine having Lauren as a mentor was a great experience and really nice to come full circle and serve on her Board of Directors now. That's great. Vicky, you already sort of talked about the fact that you got everything out of the program that you hoped to. So I'm curious from Sai and Adya, and maybe I'll start with Adya on this one, was there anything you hoped to get out of your program and didn't?

A

Adya Misra 22:02

It's a hard question to answer. Because of course, as I mentioned, I was looking for some career advice. And as you can imagine, that's quite hard to do when you've started a new job, if you don't really have direct control over where that goes. And starting a mentoring program and hoping for career advice was difficult for me. I had a great mentor. But of course, she didn't have direct experience with what I do, or anything even remotely related. So I didn't get, you know, the specific advice that I was perhaps hoping to achieve. But I think what I got instead



was much more valuable and much more translatable to actual - having an actual career, rather than thinking about, you know, a tick box exercise that says, oh, this is what you should do next, etc. etc. So, yeah, I didn't get what I originally hoped for. But I think what I got was much better.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 23:06

Yeah, that's really interesting. I think I'm hearing this in all of the answers that all three of you are giving that it really is important to go into programs like this with an open mind because often, the most valuable things you get out of it are sort of some of the softer things that aren't your sort of concrete goals that you have in mind. But they're things like greater confidence, more connections, a support network... that's a really important thing to keep in mind. Sai, anything on your end?

**S** Sai Konda 23:32

I think I would echo the same same thoughts. And I think I, too, went with an open mind. I didn't have a, beyond mentorship and networking. I didn't have other things that I was expecting from the program. But I think I got so much more back in return that it was just a very good experience. And like you said, going with an open mind is the key to these kind of initiatives, be it fellowship or mentorship where you might in the end get more than what you have thought about.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 24:05

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I think we've touched on this a lot, but I'll ask this and see if any of you have anything additional to add on this point. But are there impacts that you've seen since your participation in the program on either your specific job, your network, or just your career path in general? Is there anything we haven't covered there yet that you think is worth mentioning?

**V** Vicky Truter 24:28

I've got a new job since joining the fellowship and SSP. If my experience with SSP hasn't directly affected my ability to get that job, it has definitely contributed to my confidence with applying and interviewing for that job.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 24:47

That's a great example, well worth mentioning.

**S** Sai Konda 24:49

Yeah, for me the fellowship was a great foundation to the start of my career in scholarly

publishing. And if I look back, I think the number of leadership opportunities that came my way either as working in the subcommittee, but I also went on to become a manager at ACS and still continue to be a manager at this point. And of course now just getting to serve on the Board of Directors and getting a feel of governance and leadership opportunities. I think that's been the biggest consequence or biggest plus point of the fellowship, I believe, for my career.

A

Adya Misra 25:27

Yeah, I think I'll just I'll echo Sai's comments that I feel like I'm much more prepared to take on leadership roles now that I've been through a process that has given me the tools to handle new opportunities, which, two years ago, I might have said, probably no to or pondered over for months. Now I just say yes. Which is really great.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 25:53

Oh, wow. That's a great effect to have from from participating in the organization. So I want to ask you, in general, any of you, whether you have advice for early career professionals, who are just getting into the industry and getting familiarized with both the industry but also industry organizations like SSP, there are others out there like SSP as well. Do you have any general advice? Let's start with Vicky.

V

Vicky Truter 26:18

I'm thinking back to when I first applied to the fellowship program. I really liked the fellowship program because it was so structured. And I think, if you are an early career professional who doesn't really know where to begin, a program like that is so, so, so helpful. And I think that the mentorship program would be the same. I think that it's easier to network if you manage to get into a program like this. That would definitely be my strongest piece of advice is try to get involved in a program like this. And otherwise, try to volunteer for some kind of committee or organization or group outside of your company. So the - I think just the benefits that I have had from doing volunteer work for SSP's Early Career Subcommittee have been so huge for me. They've made a huge difference to how I see myself and to how I work. You know, I'm a person who probably likes a quite a structured approach. That would be my advice.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 27:31

Any other thoughts? Maybe Sai?

S

Sai Konda 27:33

Yeah, I think I would say that networking is very important, especially when you're starting early off in your career. But then I do want to put that in perspective, given the times that we are going through, it's really challenging. There haven't been any personal conferences where you can attend in person. So I would say, first of all, we need to adapt to situations. You cannot get a situation more worse than this to kind of reinvent yourself and come up with new ideas

as to how you might want to approach different things, both professional and personal. So we may ask the question, how can we network when we don't have any in person events? I think SSB has put together some very significant tools. I think one program is called a Quick Connect program, again, check, I guess, on the website. And there's also something that the Career Development Committee has organized, it's called the Professional Skills Map. And I think you also have resources like LinkedIn where I think the networking has now moved to a virtual network where it makes it possible for you to at least meet some people out there. The first time I started networking, it wasn't an easy thing to do. And the way I kind of figured out a solution to that was, I just tried to meet as many people as I could, without any end goal specifically in mind. So for example, oftentimes, we may think that networking is something that you may have to start doing because you're looking for a new job or you're - there's some fixed angle to it. But then if you try to approach it with an open mind without having a specific goal... you know, you will you will make mistakes, which is fine, because there's nothing much to lose. But then what will happen is as you do more of it, you get into practice, and then when it really matters, I think it'll pay dividends at that time. And I think lastly, I would say it's important to ask questions, be it in a forum, like Vicky said, I think the other important part is try to volunteer as much as possible. And through that volunteering opportunities, if you get to participate in panels or if you get to even attend any online virtual seminars. Don't be afraid to ask questions. I know it's harder in the virtual format. But I think that's one way of putting yourself out there, getting your voice heard and also receiving some feedback as to what you might be thinking about some process or some workflow or maybe there's something about open access that you're not sure of. Just as an example. So I would say there's three things: there's networking, willing to adapt to situations, and try to ask questions as much as possible.

V

Vicky Truter 30:14

It's very good advice. But as - I mean, I'm just thinking of myself. I mean, how long - it was probably like two and a half years ago, when I was at the annual meeting for the first time, I honestly didn't even know where to begin, even though I was part of the fellowship group. And the thought of asking a question in a conference setting would probably have been terrifying to me at the time. I think it is really good advice. But I think that for me, definitely it would be asking questions and networking would be about trying to find people one-on-one, I think that that's probably what I would have advised my earlier self to do is to seek people out on a one-on-one basis and take it from there. I found networking to be such a difficult thing to do. Like if you don't know how to do it, and you've never really done it before. How do you approach that as a person who might not know anyone? Or? Yeah, I guess you just don't really know where to begin.

S

Sai Konda 31:17

I think you made an important point I didn't touch on, what's the best way to ask questions? And I think very similar to you, I started off with talking to the speakers one-on-one after the event, because I was terrified to come up with a question in a public setting. And this was back in grad school days where things were technical, and it was really terrifying to sound like the idiot in the conference room probably asked a stupid question to a professor, giving a talk. So definitely, you know, that's a good way to start asking questions, I guess, until you develop the confidence to come up in an open setting. But I think you also make a very important point about where do you start with networking? And I kind of thought about this a lot as well. You

know, you have your organization, you could you could start internally, for example, if people from within your group and start your - start spreading the network slowly from there, there is no one solution for how would you go about networking, unless until you actually put yourself out there. I know, it's difficult for to do that in the beginning stages. But maybe it's getting to start with people whom you work at the the organization, whom you're at least a little bit familiar with, but you're not have spoken to them prior. I think that's something to start off with maybe, maybe others, others have ideas,

V

Vicky Truter 32:42

I think that maybe the way to do it is to just steal other people's networks. So like, get a mentor, and just slot yourself into their network somehow. Like, get them to introduce you to, you know, people that they've networked with already, maybe that's the way to do it.

S

Sai Konda 33:02

Absolutely. I think that's where things like volunteering and getting, and being involved in mentorship does the exact same thing, I believe.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 33:12

Yeah, and just to say that I think you have every right to expect your mentor, however you're matched with them, to open their network up to you. That's one of the huge benefits of having a mentor is being able to say, who are the people in this space that you can connect me with? Because one person can't support you in every aspect, right? So really, part of the benefit is that person knowing other people they can point you towards and then thus building your network. I'm really glad that you both brought up this idea that it's not always super easy as a new person in the field to feel comfortable, especially if you're just a person who's a little bit more reserved. So I actually want to go to Adya for a second here because Adya, you mentioned that one of the things you got out of the mentorship program was a bit of building confidence. So I want to see if you have anything to add in terms of advice for individuals who might be lacking a little bit in confidence early in their careers and might find it difficult to come forward for events and programs like this. Do you have any advice?

A

Adya Misra 34:11

I was definitely one of those people. The thought of networking would give me sweaty palms. Definitely. And I think the only way to do it is to fake it till you make it. You just need to say yes. If an opportunity presents itself, and it doesn't sound terrifying or absolutely awful, just say yes. And just do it. That's what I've been practicing for the last year. I put myself out there so much more. And even though I'm absolutely terrified - I was absolutely terrified even before this podcast, but it's actually not that bad. It's good to say yes to opportunities if they interest you and is a really, really good way to build your network. Of course, some people will find it really difficult to put themselves out there. But I think eventually, after trying a few times for smaller events, they'll be able to make a bigger jump to something that will actually help. It's

just about practice, like anything else. So you practice saying yes to small things at work. And then you'll start saying yes to bigger things outside of work, and you'll be a different person in a few years.

V

Vicky Truter 35:24

Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned sweaty palms. I think it's really important actually to acknowledge the terror and the trauma that you know, you can experience in being so brand new to something, I think it's easy to think that you're the only one who might be struggling with something and everyone else is just cool as a cucumber. It's reassuring to know that you're not the only one fretting or having a mild freakout.

S

Sai Konda 35:56

One other idea that has also helped me in the past, especially when you're starting off new, perhaps talking to someone who works in similar areas. Let's say for example, I work in journals and editorial development, and maybe talking to someone from a different publisher who manages similar set of journals. I remember actually, one of the fellows in the same year as I had my fellowship, she was from RSC, and she had a similar scientific background to what I had. And I remember having a lot of good conversations with her. And that kind of got started with the networking. And I use the strategy with other people and eventually you get to a point where you understand things better, you get comfortable, and then you can start to expand your network a little bit more.

M

Meredith Adinolfi 36:50

These are great bits of advice to potentially close the conversation on. So I just want to do a check with everyone to see if there any other thoughts or bits of advice about the programs or SSP or the industry in general that we didn't get to that you'd like to add to close the conversation.

S

Sai Konda 37:06

SSP has a number of resources. And it all comes down to how much effort one is willing to put personally to be out there, whether it's in terms of volunteering or applying for different programs. As I mentioned, there are also other tools like Quick Connect, Professional Skills Map, but you'll find that the community overall is very supportive. If you make an effort, I'm sure everyone will will get rich dividends out of participating in in these industry events. I think that's the best part of SSP that really took me by surprise when I first got involved with the organization was just how open and welcoming people from different organizations and different backgrounds are to helping each other in the industry.

V

Vicky Truter 37:56

I think that SSP does a really good job of making space for people who want to put in the time. Even if you're on the quieter or more introverted side, people will notice when you put effort

even if you're on the quieter or more introverted side, people will notice when you put effort into something, even if that's just writing a document or collecting some data, you know, as a volunteer for one of the committees, I think it's important to acknowledge that you don't have to be leading the meetings or instigating relationships to make a difference and to get people to notice that you're making a valuable contribution.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 38:32  
Adya, any final thoughts on your end?

**A** Adya Misra 38:34  
And in addition to what Sai and Vicky have already said, I'll just say that the easiest way to get involved or put your name out there a bit more is to join a regional meetup. A lot of regional committees with SSP are organizing meetups that are very casual. You don't have to speak, you don't have to contribute or lead the meetings. If you show up, it's a really nice environment, very friendly. And there's always chatter that you can contribute to or just listen to. And it's a very easy way to network with people. And it's low effort since we're all at home, safe, in front of a computer. And that's what I would suggest.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 39:16  
Thank you guys so much for this really interesting conversation. I feel like there were a lot of really practical tidbits in here for people to take away. So thank you so much for taking the time to have this conversation.

**V** Vicky Truter 39:26  
Yeah, no problem, Meredith. Thank you very much for inviting us.

**S** Sai Konda 39:30  
Yeah, thank you for having us on the panel.

**A** Adya Misra 39:32  
Thank you.

**M** Meredith Adinolfi 39:36  
This conversation has reinforced for me how committed SSP and other industry organizations are to developing the next generation of leaders who will hopefully contribute to a strong, inclusive, and impactful future for the industry that we all love so much. I want to thank Vicky,

Sai, and Adya for taking the time to be here and for sharing your thoughts and experiences. I've really enjoyed talking to all of you and wish you all the best in continuing to navigate your careers. I will certainly be keeping an eye out for all the amazing things you will be doing in the industry. Thank you.