

Ed O'Brien

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EMPLOYMENT

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 07/18 – present | Associate Professor of Behavioral Science, Chicago Booth
<i>Charles E. Merrill Faculty Scholar</i> |
| 07/14 – 07/18 | Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science, Chicago Booth
<i>Willard Graham Faculty Scholar</i> |

EDUCATION

- | | |
|----------|--|
| May 2014 | PhD, Social Psychology, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor MI)
<i>National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship</i>
<i>Pat Gurin Award (Best Research Program)</i>
<i>Philip Brickman Memorial Prize (Best Paper)</i>
<i>Golden Walnut Award (Best Talk)</i> |
| May 2009 | BS, Psychology, Saint Joseph's University (Philadelphia PA)
<i>Summa cum laude</i>
<i>University Scholar (top student of graduating class; > 1,000 students)</i> |

RESEARCH INTERESTS

I'm a behavioral scientist trained in experimental social psychology. I study social cognition with a focus on temporal contexts. I'm interested in how people's interpretations of change over time influence their cognition, emotion, and behavior.

I use this unique lens of **time and change** to provide novel solutions to problems like:

- **Well-being mismanagement** (e.g., I find that people often struggle to anticipate how the old and boring can be reignited in new contexts—interventions that entail designing new contexts thus help combat hedonic adaptation, without having to quit consumption)
- **Impression mismanagement** (e.g., I find that people often struggle to anticipate how their present actions will “age” upon looking back at them in the future—interventions that target actors' temporal thinking thus help people build longer-lasting reputations)
- **Social conflict and interpersonal misunderstandings** (e.g., I find that people often struggle to anticipate others' change from bad pasts and potential for positive futures—interventions that make others' change more salient thus help bridge these divides)

HONORS & AWARDS

2024	SPSP Fellow (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2024	APS Fellow (Association for Psychological Science)
2023	APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions (Association for Psychological Science)
2023	ISSEP Best Paper Award (published in <i>Consumer Psychology Review</i>)
2023	Frontiers Rising Star in Social Psychology
2019 – 2020	Morrison Faculty Fellow, UCLA Anderson School of Management
2019	SPSP Sage Young Scholar Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2019	SESP Fellow (Society of Experimental Social Psychology)
2018	Poets & Quants 40 Under 40 Most Outstanding Business School Professors
2017	ISCON Early Career Award (International Social Cognition Network)
2016	APS Rising Star Award (Association for Psychological Science)
2016	Psychology Today Up-and-Comer
2015	Pacific Standard Top 30 Thinkers Under 30
2012	SJDM Hillel Einhorn New Investigator Award, Runner-up (Society for Judgment and Decision Making)
2010	SPSP Best Poster Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2010	SPSP Travel Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2010 – 2013	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (National Science Foundation)

PUBLICATIONS

*** *Denotes supervisee*

46. O'Brien, E. (in press). A Flexible Threshold Theory of Change Perception in Self, Others, and The World. *Psychological Review*.

45. ***Winet, Y. K., & O'Brien, E. (in press). Familiarity Seeking: Growing and Learning From Repeat Experiences. In Vail, K. E., Van Tongeren, D. V., Schlegel, R. J., Greenberg, J., King, L. A., & Ryan, R. M. (Eds.), *Handbook of the Science of Existential Psychology*. New York: Guilford Press.
44. O'Brien, E. (in press). Things Change—But When? A Top-Down Approach to Understanding How People Judge Change Thresholds. In Taku, K., & Shackelford, T. K. (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Changes in Human Perceptions and Behaviors*. London: Taylor & Francis.
43. O'Brien, E. (2023). Judging Change: A Flexible Threshold Theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 68, 223-290.
42. ***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2023). Threshold Violations in Social Judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125, 284-315.
41. ***Li, X., Hsee, C. K., & O'Brien, E. (2023). “It Could Be Better” Can Make It Worse: When and Why People Mistakenly Communicate Upward Counterfactual Information. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 60, 219-236.
40. ***Winet, Y. K., & O'Brien, E. (2023). Ending on a Familiar Note: Perceived Endings Motivate Repeat Consumption. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124, 707-734.
39. Weingarten, E., Duke, K. E., Liu, W., Hamilton, R. W., Amir, O., Appel, G., Cerf, M., Goodman, J. K., Morales, A. C., O'Brien, E., Quoidbach, J., & Sun, M. (2023). What Makes People Happy? Decoupling the Experiential-Material Continuum. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 33, 97-106.
38. ***Kardas, M., Schroeder, J., & O'Brien, E. (2022). Keep Talking: (Mis)Understanding the Hedonic Trajectory of Conversation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 123, 717-740.
37. O'Brien, E. (2022). Look Back, Not Ahead? Time Use and the Value of Revisiting Past Experiences. In Hoerl, C., McCormack, T., & Fernandes, A. (Eds.), *Temporal Asymmetries in Philosophy and Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
36. ***Wald, K. A., & O'Brien, E. (2022). Repeated Exposure to Success Harshens Reactions to Failure. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 103, 1-18.
35. O'Brien, E. (2022). Losing Sight of Piecemeal Progress: People Lump and Dismiss Improvement Efforts That Fall Short of Categorical Change—Despite Improving. *Psychological Science*, 33, 1278-1299.
34. O'Brien, E. (2022). The “Next” Effect: When a Better Future Worsens the Present. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 13, 456-465.

33. O'Brien, E. (2021). A Mind Stretched: The Psychology of Repeat Consumption. *Consumer Psychology Review*, 4, 42-58. → Winner, ISSEP Best Paper Award
32. O'Brien, E. (2020). When Small Signs of Change Add Up: The Psychology of Tipping Points. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 29, 55-62.
31. ***Kristal, A. C., O'Brien, E., & Caruso, E. M. (2019). Yesterday's News: A Temporal Discontinuity in the Sting of Inferiority. *Psychological Science*, 30, 643-656.
30. O'Brien, E. (2019). Enjoy It Again: Repeat Experiences are Less Repetitive Than People Think. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116, 519-540.
29. O'Brien, E., & ***Kassirer, S. (2019). People are Slow to Adapt to the Warm Glow of Giving. *Psychological Science*, 30, 193-204.
28. ***Roberts, A. R., & O'Brien, E. (2019). Work Well-Being. In Dunn, D. S. (Ed.), *Oxford Bibliographies in Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
27. O'Brien, E., & Smith, R. W. (2019). Unconventional Consumption Methods and Enjoying Things Consumed: Recapturing the "First Time" Experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 45, 67-80.
26. ***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2018). People Use Less Information Than They Think to Make Up Their Minds. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115, 13222-13227.
25. ***Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. (2018). Easier Seen Than Done: Merely Watching Others Perform Can Foster an Illusion of Skill Acquisition. *Psychological Science*, 29, 521-536.
24. O'Brien, E., ***Kristal, A. C., Ellsworth, P. C., & Schwarz, N. (2018). (Mis)imagining the Good Life and the Bad Life: Envy and Pity as a Function of the Focusing Illusion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 75, 41-53.
23. O'Brien, E., & ***Roney, E. (2017). Worth the Wait? Leisure Can Be Just as Enjoyable with Work Left Undone. *Psychological Science*, 28, 1000-1015.
22. ***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2017). The Power and Limits of Personal Change: When a Bad Past Does (and Does Not) Inspire in the Present. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113, 210-229.
21. O'Brien, E., & ***Klein, N. (2017). The Tipping Point of Perceived Change: Asymmetric Thresholds in Diagnosing Improvement Versus Decline. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112, 161-185.
20. Chopik, W. J., O'Brien, E., & Konrath, S. H. (2017). Differences in Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking Across 63 Countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 48, 23-38.

19. Chopik, W. J., & O'Brien, E. (2017). Happy You, Healthy Me? Having a Happy Partner is Independently Associated With Better Health in Oneself. *Health Psychology*, 36, 21-30.
18. O'Brien, E., & ***Kardas, M. (2016). The Implicit Meaning of (My) Change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111, 882-894.
17. ***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2016). The Tipping Point of Moral Change: When Do Good and Bad Acts Make Good and Bad Actors? *Social Cognition*, 34, 149-166.
16. O'Brien, E. (2015). Mapping Out Past Versus Future Minds: The Perceived Trajectory of Rationality Versus Emotionality Over Time. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144, 624-628. → **Runner-up, SJDM Einhorn Award**
15. O'Brien, E. (2015). Feeling Connected to Younger Versus Older Selves: The Asymmetric Impact of Life Stage Orientation. *Cognition and Emotion*, 29, 678-686.
14. Chopik, W. J., O'Brien, E., Konrath, S. H., & Schwarz, N. (2015). MLK Day and Attitude Change: Liking the Group More but its Members Less. *Political Psychology*, 36, 559-567.
13. Konrath, S. H., Chopik, W. J., Hsing, C., & O'Brien, E. (2014). Changes in Adult Attachment Styles in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18, 326-348.
12. Campbell, T., O'Brien, E., Van Boven, L., Schwarz, N., & Ubel, P. A. (2014). Too Much Experience: A Desensitization Bias in Emotional Perspective Taking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106, 272-285.
11. O'Brien, E., & Hagen, L. (2013). The Thrill of (Absolute) Victory: Success Among Many Enhances Emotional Payoffs. *Emotion*, 13, 366-374.
10. O'Brien, E. (2013). Easy to Retrieve but Hard to Believe: Metacognitive Discounting of the Unpleasantly Possible. *Psychological Science*, 24, 844-851.
9. O'Brien, E., Konrath, S. H., Grühn, D., & Hagen, L. (2013). Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking: Linear and Quadratic Effects of Age Across the Adult Lifespan. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 68, 168-175.
8. O'Brien, E., Ellsworth, P. C., & Schwarz, N. (2012). Today's Misery and Yesterday's Happiness: Differential Effects of Current Life-Events on Perceptions of Past Well-Being. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 968-972.
7. O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2012). Polar Opposites: Empathy Does Not Extend Across the Political Aisle. *The Jury Expert*, 24, 25-39.
6. O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2012). More Than Skin Deep: Visceral States Are Not Projected Onto Dissimilar Others. *Psychological Science*, 23, 391-396.

5. O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2012). Saving the Last for Best: A Positivity Bias for End Experiences. *Psychological Science*, 23, 163-165.
4. Bushman, B. J., & O'Brien, E. (2012). Aggression. In Ramachandran, V. S. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*. New York: Academic Press.
3. O'Brien, E., Anastasio, P. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2011). Time Crawls When You're Not Having Fun: Feeling Entitled Makes Dull Tasks Drag On. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37, 1287-1296.
2. Konrath, S. H., O'Brien, E., & Hsing, C. (2011). Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15, 180-198.
1. Anderson, M. A., Williams, S. A., & O'Brien, E. (2009). Individual Differences in Preferred Neck-Resting Position of Caribbean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus Ruber*). *Laterality: Asymmetries of Body, Brain and Cognition*, 14, 66-78.

SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

*** Denotes supervisee

***Hong, S., & O'Brien, E. (R&R). Repeatedly Soliciting Hedonic Reactions Can Exacerbate Hedonic Adaptation. *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Hagen, L., & O'Brien, E. (R&R). Lost Time Undermines Return Behavior. *PNAS Nexus*.

***Zaw, S., & O'Brien, E. (under review). Repeated Failures to Change Reveal a Hidden Harshness to Growth Mindset. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

O'Brien, E. (under review). One's Actions "Aging Poorly": An Integrative Review and Egocentric Framework for Understanding Impression Management Errors and the Challenge of Temporal Impression Management. *Psychological Bulletin*.

***Wang, J., & O'Brien, E. (collecting data). How Will Today Look Tomorrow? (Mis)Perceiving How Things "Age" Over Time.

***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (collecting data). Threshold Violations in Social Judgment: Interventions for Conflict Resolution.

***Su, T., & O'Brien, E. (collecting data). Change Perception Beyond Change Detection.

***Zaw, S., & O'Brien, E. (collecting data). Incentives and Change Perception.

OTHER BUSINESS OUTPUT

*** Denotes supervisee

Op-Ed articles (authored):

***Wald, K. A., & O'Brien, E. The Perils of Watching Success. *Character & Context*.

O'Brien, E. Humans are Hard-Wired to Expect the Worst. *Washington Post*.

O'Brien, E. There's a Psychological Reason We Won't Return to Normal Right Away After Society Reopens. *Los Angeles Times*.

O'Brien, E., & ***Klein, N. It's Hard to Shake a Bad Reputation. *Fortune*.

Smith, R. W., & O'Brien, E. Why You Should Eat Popcorn With Chopsticks, and Other Psychological Tricks to Make Life More Enjoyable. *The Conversation*.

Managerial Publications (authored):

***Yoon, J., Whillans, A. V., & O'Brien, E. How to Make Even the Most Mundane Tasks More Motivating. *Harvard Business Review*.

O'Brien, E. We Use Less Information to Make Decisions Than We Think. *Harvard Business Review*.

***Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. Watching an Expert Do Something Makes You Think You Can Do It Too. *Harvard Business Review*.

O'Brien, E. Stop Putting Off Fun for After You Finish All Your Work. *Harvard Business Review*.

Podcasts (interviewed as guest):

"Why the Best Chocolate Is the One You Eat Last," *NPR All Things Considered*.

"Finding Joy in Repeat Experiences, Even During a Pandemic," *NPR Ideas Network*.

"Close Enough: The Lure of Living Through Others," *NPR Hidden Brain*.

"How to Make Boring Work Feel New Again," *Fast Company*.

"Confidence: Why It Misleads Us," *BBC Why Factor*.

"It's Getting Worse! The Science of Negativity Bias," *Canvas8*.

"YouTube Isn't as Good a Teacher as You Think," *Chicago Booth Review*.

“You’re Underestimating the Pleasure of Talking to Strangers,” *Chicago Booth Review*.

“How Managers Can Set Smarter Performance Benchmarks,” *Chicago Booth Review*.

CONFERENCE TALKS

ACR (Association for Consumer Research):

2024, 2023, 2022, 2020, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2012

APS (Association for Psychological Science):

2022, 2017, 2016

Chaired symposia 2017, 2016

BDRM (Behavioral Decision Research in Management):

2024, 2018, 2014

Choice Symposium:

2019

IACM (International Association for Conflict Management):

2023

INFORMS Marketing Science:

2021

SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology):

2024, 2013

SESP (Society of Experimental Social Psychology):

2024—forthcoming, 2022, 2021, 2017, 2016, 2012, 2011

Chaired symposia 2022, 2021, 2016, 2012, 2011

SJDM (Society for Judgment and Decision Making):

2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2011, 2010

SPSP (Society for Personality and Social Psychology):

2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2018, 2016, 2015, 2013, 2012

Chaired symposia 2022, 2021, 2016, 2012

INVITED TALKS

UPenn, Annenberg (forthcoming), Social Action Lab
Boston University, Questrom (forthcoming), Marketing
UT Austin, McCombs (forthcoming), Marketing

Dartmouth, Tuck (2024), Marketing
Cornell, Johnson (2024), Marketing
Yale SOM (2023), Marketing
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Gies (2022), Organizational Behavior
UCSD, Rady (2021), Marketing
Simon Fraser, Beedie (2021), Marketing
Data Colada panelist (2021)
Stanford GSB (2020), Marketing
Zoom U Behavioral Lab (2020)
UPenn, Wharton (invited; cancelled due to pandemic), Marketing
UCLA, Anderson (2019), Marketing
UC Berkeley, Haas (2019), Management
UCLA, Anderson (2019), Marketing
UToronto, Rotman (2019), Marketing
Cornell, BEDR (2019)
Duke, Fuqua (2019), Marketing
Harvard Business School (2018), NOM
Michigan State University (2017), Psychology
University of Waterloo (2016), Psychology
University of Illinois Chicago (2015), Psychology
UCLA, Anderson (2013), Marketing
Cornell, Johnson (2013), Marketing
Yale SOM (2013), Marketing
Indiana University (2013), Psychology
Minnesota, Carlson (2013), Marketing
New York University (2013), Psychology
Chicago Booth (2013), Behavioral Science
Stanford GSB (2013), Organizational Behavior
Harvard University (2013), Psychology

TEACHING

MBA: Managing in Organizations (Chicago Booth, BUSN 38001)

Each year since 2015; scheduled to teach next Summer 2025

Full time program, evening program, weekend program

Evaluations (969 respondents over 10 courses): Mean = 4.9/5, Median = 5/5, Mode = 5/5

PhD: Current Topics in Behavioral Science (Chicago Booth, BUSN 38903)

2023, 2020, 2018, 2016; scheduled to teach next Spring 2025

Evaluations (32 respondents over 4 courses): Mean = 5/5, Median = 5/5, Mode = 5/5

Undergraduate TA (University of Michigan)

Introduction to Psychology (PSYCH 111)

Introduction to Social Psychology (PSYCH 280)

Social Cognition: Thinking About Your Life (PSYCH 487)

RESEARCH LAB AND ADVISING

I direct the **Change Lab** at Chicago Booth. For more details, including details of our newest ongoing research, please see cobpsych.com.

Current PhD students:

Stephanie Hong, 3rd year in Booth Marketing
Tong Su, 3rd year in Booth Behavioral Science
Jiabi Wang, 3rd year in Booth Behavioral Science
Samantha Zaw, 2nd year in Booth Behavioral Science

Lab alumni and their placements (academic):

Cora Baron (former research assistant)—Psychology PhD Student, UC Santa Barbara
Kate Christensen (former PhD student)—Marketing Faculty, Indiana University (Kelley)
Mike Kardas (former PhD student & dissertation committee)—Management Faculty, OK State
Samantha Kassirer (former Master's student)—Marketing Postdoc, UToronto (Rotman)
Nadav Klein (former Postdoc)—Management Faculty, INSEAD
Alex Kristal (former lab manager)—Marketing PhD Student, London Business School
Xilin Li (former PhD student & dissertation committee)—Marketing Faculty, CEIBS
Lauren Lutzke (former research assistant)—Marketing Postdoc, UPenn (Kleinman Center)
Annabelle Roberts (former PhD student)—Marketing Faculty, UT Austin (McCombs)
Janina Steinmetz (former Postdoc)—Marketing Faculty, City University London (Bayes)
Kristina Wald (former PhD student)—Postdoc, UPenn (Wharton OID)
Mike White (former research assistant)—Management PhD Student, Columbia Business School
Yuji Winet (former PhD student & dissertation chair)—Marketing Faculty, Duke (Fuqua)
Xuan Zhao (former Postdoc)—Research Scientist, Stanford (SPARQ)
Haotian Zhou (former Postdoc)—Management Faculty, ShanghaiTech University

Lab alumni and their placements (industry):

Mick Adkins (former research assistant)—Product Director, Primordial Labs
Shinhae Bang (former research assistant)—User Experience Researcher, Zoom
Allison Endres (former research assistant)—Service Operations Specialist, KEEN Footwear
Sarah Lee (former research assistant)—Marketing Manager, Barti Eyewear
Radhika Menon (former research assistant)—Associate Director (Digital), Horizon Media
Miguel Ortega (former research assistant)—Technology Consultant, Accenture
Craig Sanders (former research assistant)—Research Engineer (Human Perception), Meta
Jaewon Yoon (former research assistant & honors thesis advisor)—Senior Data Scientist, Meta

Other research assistants:

Danielle Brace; Ali Breeding; Julia Briskin; Danielle Brodsky; Tanya Burgess; Alvin Chan;
Anum Chaudhry; Anne Derrenberger; Jonathan Fischell; Yara Ganem; Ethan Goldsmith; Curtis Grayer III; Melody Haxton; Danielle Hicks; Nick Johnson; Kaleah Mabin; Kathryn Mitchell;
Hannah Noah; Adam Parada; Matt Pilon; Harry Reibman; Ellen Roney; Taylor Rothman; Matt Thomas; Nick Thomas; Shun Wang; Colin Zaporski

OTHER ADVISING

Dissertation committee chair:

Yuji Winet (placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, Duke Fuqua)

Dissertation committee member:

Melissa Beswick; Mike Kardas; Xilin Li; Sarah Molouki; Natalie Wheeler

Curriculum paper advisor:

Melissa Beswick; Stephanie Hong; Xilin Li; Yuji Winet

Undergraduate honors thesis advisor:

Yara Ganem; Hannah Noah; Ellen Roney; Taylor Rothman; Jaewon Yoon

Faculty mentor:

National Leadership Alliance

Rising Scholars Program

DEI Program of SCP (Society for Consumer Psychology)

SERVICE

Associate Editor:

Social Cognition (2023 – present)

Editorial Review Board:

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (2021 – 2023):

Conference reviewer (recent examples):

BDRM, SJDM, SPSP

Grant reviewer (recent examples):

Marsden Fund, National Science Foundation

Ad-hoc reviewer (recent examples): *Psychological Review*; *Psychological Science*; *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*; *Management Science*; *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*; *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*; *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*; *Perspectives on Psychological Science*; *Nature Human Behaviour*; *PNAS*

Chicago Booth workshop organizer (Center for Decision Research):

2023, 2019, 2016

PERSONAL

U.S. Citizen; Born 1986, Camden NJ; Married 2015 (1 child, born 2022)