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Editorial

Nurturing ideas, cultivating reviewers: The C.E.D.A.R. tree of generative peer review

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ABSTRACT

This editorial advocates a generative perspective on the peer review of manuscripts in management and organization research. It argues that reviewing should grow from shared values (the soil) that ground a journal's intellectual mission, take form through consistent scholarly practices (the roots), and yield developmental outcomes for the academic community (the fruits). Drawing on the *European Management Journal's* values of critical inquiry, pluralism, and accessibility, we introduce the C.E.D.A.R. tree of generative peer review, a metaphor and framework that connects values, practices, and outcomes. The five roots - namely, Curiosity, Empathy, Developmental judgment, Actionable guidance, and Reflexive reflection - translate this ethos into teachable habits. The fruits - generative peer reviews, inclusive scholarship, author growth, generative reviewers, and scholarly mentorship within a sustainable scholarly ecosystem - embody the enduring outcomes of such reviewing. Together, these elements reframe peer review as a living, developmental system and an expression of scholarly citizenship that nurtures both ideas and communities of practice.

1. Beyond gatekeeping: peer review as generative scholarly practice

Academic peer review is the structured process through which manuscripts are evaluated by scholars prior to publication. Typically anonymized, peer review assesses rigor, originality, clarity, and alignment with a journal's scope. Reviewers identify strengths and limitations, offer suggestions, and recommend outcomes such as acceptance, revision, or rejection. At its core, peer review serves as a disciplinary checkpoint - a gatekeeping mechanism that determines which ideas are worthy of entry, which require refinement, and which must be rejected. This role preserves standards while shaping the intellectual trajectory of a field.

Yet this procedural view tells only part of the story. Beneath its formal protocols, peer review is shaped by two persistent tensions. The first concerns time and volume. Reviewer disengagement and workload imbalance result in a small proportion of scholars conducting most reviews, while many decline invitations (AMR, 2025; Leung et al., 2014; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023; Ragins, 2015). As associate editors, we are acutely aware of the overload created by clustered deadlines and rising submission volumes. These pressures stretch reviewers to capacity

limits, while incentive systems continue to reward publishing rather than reviewing (Lewin, 2014). Editors often struggle to secure referees, overburdening those who accept and narrowing the pool of available expertise. Fatigue is intensified by the lack of formal reviewer training, as many learn through trial and error, which can reproduce unhelpful norms (Forero et al., 2025; Hughes et al., 2023). Lengthy review cycles and multiple rounds of revision delay dissemination, stress authors, and strain the system (Leung et al., 2014). Moreover, heavily solicited reviewers tend to decline invitations outside their areas of specialization, further reducing intellectual diversity.

The second tension lies in the judgment and epistemic politics of review reports. Repeated revisions often prompt authors to conform to disciplinary orthodoxy, resulting in homogeneity and stifled innovation (Bedeian, 2004; Brewis, 2018; Krlev & Spicer, 2023; Lee et al., 2013; Renwick et al., 2019). Reviewers are increasingly expected to evaluate diverse methodologies and philosophical orientations, yet guidance on navigating paradigmatic divides remains limited (Brewis, 2018; Partridge, 2017). Although peer review aspires to inclusivity, it frequently polices epistemic boundaries in the name of objectivity, reproducing exclusions that mirror broader epistemic injustices (Dahlgren, 2022; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023). Judgment is also influenced by social,

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intellectual, and political biases, which can disadvantage authors from underrepresented backgrounds or non-English-speaking contexts, while reinforcing dominant paradigms and marginalizing unconventional perspectives (Krevl & Spicer, 2023; Lee et al., 2013; Leung et al., 2014; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023).

These intertwined tensions reveal a deeper issue: the very purpose of peer review is unsettled. The challenge is not only one of efficiency but also of meaning. In an era of publication overload, intellectual fragmentation, and rising demands for societal relevance, peer review cannot function solely as a gatekeeping mechanism. It must evolve into a

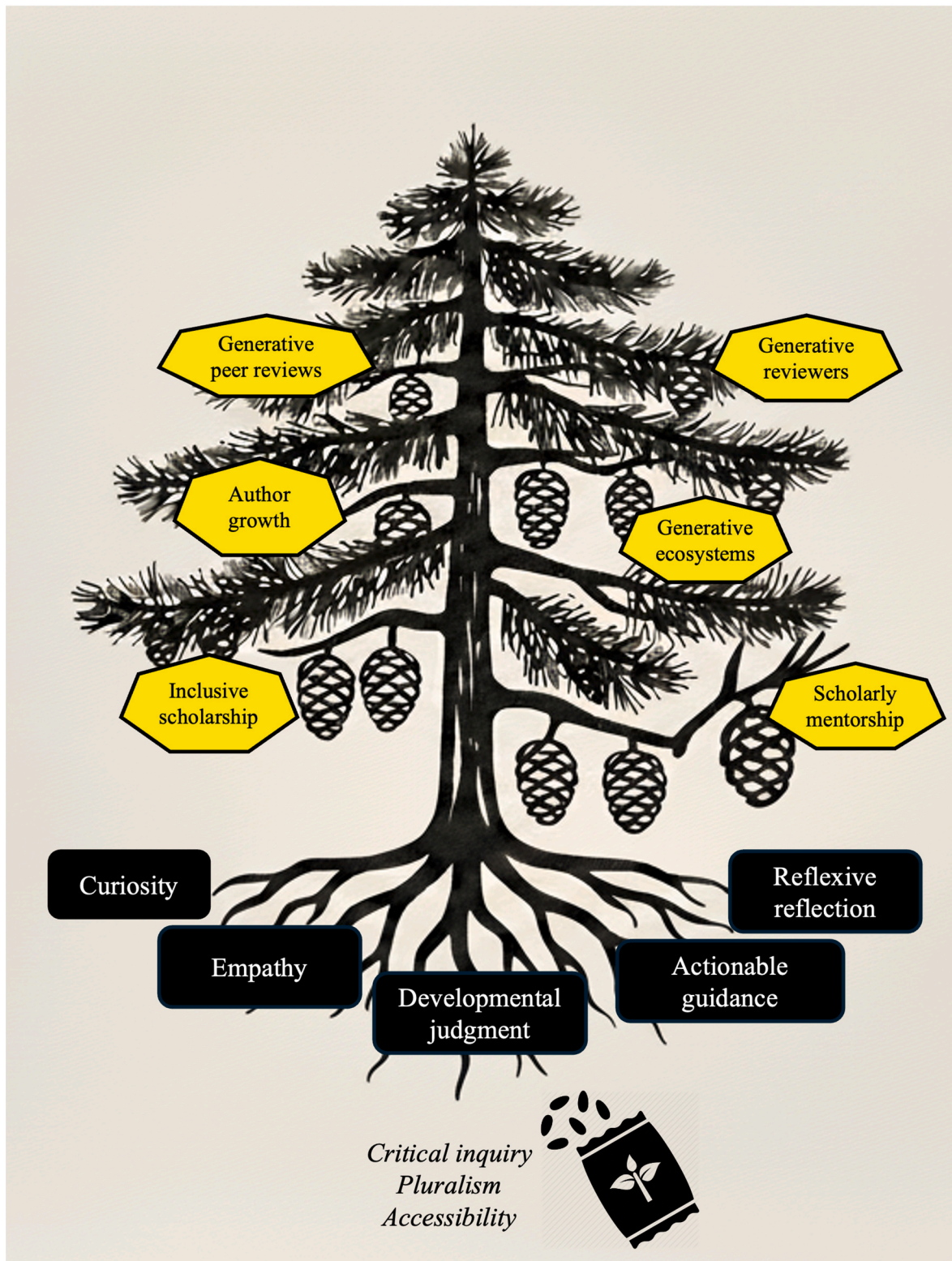


Fig. 1. The C.E.D.A.R. framework and metaphor.
Source: own elaboration

generative scholarly practice that safeguards integrity while nurturing growth. Doing so requires re-imagining reviewers not as distant evaluators but as co-creators who cultivate ideas, foster pluralism, and mentor scholarship into fuller expression (Jones & Gatrell, 2014; McMullen & Newbert, 2023). Navigating this transformation requires more than procedural competence. It demands a culture of care and reflexivity, along with cultivated sensibilities and shared frameworks that enable consistency without conformity (Schrage et al., 2025).

At the *European Management Journal (EMJ)*, this aspiration is not merely endorsed but continually pursued. *EMJ* seeks to practice what it publishes by making its commitment to critical inquiry, pluralism, and accessibility tangible in the everyday work of reviewing, editing, and developing manuscripts. Through its editorial processes, reviewer-development initiatives, and encouragement of constructive dialogue, *EMJ* strives to model a culture where peer review is understood as a formative and ethical act of scholarship rather than a procedural obligation.

This ethos, however, is neither exclusive to *EMJ* nor fully achieved within it. It represents a broader tendency and shared aspiration across the management and organization research community: to make peer review more generative, dialogical, and humane. *EMJ*'s own experience - including its successes as well as its ongoing challenges - illustrates both the promise and the difficulty of sustaining such a culture under the pressures of contemporary publishing.

To support this ongoing effort, we introduce the C.E.D.A.R. tree, a developmental framework for peer review in management and organization research (see Fig. 1). The framework serves as a metaphor that connects three interdependent layers of generative reviewing:

Soil (Values) – the shared values of critical inquiry, pluralism, and accessibility that ground the journal's intellectual mission;

Roots (Practices) – the habits through which these values are enacted: Curiosity, Empathy, Developmental judgment, Actionable guidance, and Reflexive reflection; and

Fruits (Outcomes) – the results such rooted practices enable, including generative peer reviews, inclusive scholarship, author growth, generative reviewers, and scholarly mentorship within a sustainable scholarly ecosystem.

The C.E.D.A.R. tree represents both a reflection of *EMJ*'s experience and an aspiration for its future. This is a living framework that can guide reviewers, editors, and scholars toward more constructive, caring, and plural forms of evaluation. Although born from *EMJ*'s editorial culture, its message extends beyond it, offering a shared language for re-imagining peer review as a generative scholarly practice across the broader management and organization research community.

The next section outlines the editorial ethos that nourishes this framework: the soil from which the roots of generative reviewing grow.

2. The soil of generative reviewing

At *EMJ*, peer review is grounded in three interrelated commitments: critical inquiry, pluralism, and accessibility. Together, these values define how *EMJ* seeks to foster rigorous, inclusive, and relevant scholarship. For reviewers, they provide a shared ethos: to approach each manuscript with curiosity, fairness, and developmental intent. These guiding principles reposition peer review from a gatekeeping exercise to a collaborative process that strengthens ideas and broadens the reach of management scholarship.

Critical inquiry. *EMJ* encourages submissions that challenge assumptions and generate new insights rather than replicate established viewpoints (Cristofaro et al., 2024). For reviewers, this means asking whether a manuscript stimulates fresh thinking, offers novel perspectives, or questions received wisdom. By fostering critical inquiry, reviewers help ensure that *EMJ* remains a venue where innovative ideas can take root and flourish. We particularly value reviews that move beyond fault-finding to adopt a holistic and constructive stance. This means assessing whether a paper advances theory, introduces

methodological innovation, or provides illuminating interpretations of organizational phenomena.

Pluralism. If critical inquiry sustains openness to ideas, pluralism ensures that these ideas are constructively examined across diverse traditions (Pidduck et al., 2025). Management and organization research can easily become dominated by prevailing paradigms, yet today's turbulent environment demands intellectual diversity and cross-fertilization. *EMJ* actively welcomes interdisciplinary work that bridges economics, sociology, psychology, political science, and related fields. Pluralism means valuing difference, resisting premature closure, and holding space for multiple ways of knowing. Because innovation is often difficult to assess, with its significance lying more in potential than in precedent, reviewers are encouraged to value unconventional problems, distinctive empirical contexts, and emerging theoretical voices, while also recognizing the limits of their own assumptions rather than imposing uniform standards across traditions.

Accessibility. Alongside critical inquiry and pluralism, *EMJ* emphasizes accessibility for non-specialist audiences. Articles must be rigorous yet clear, engaging, and free of unnecessary jargon. Accessibility entails crafting scholarship that communicates across disciplines and connects research to practice (Baldermann et al., 2025). By insisting on clarity of expression and coherence of argument, *EMJ* enhances its relevance not only to scholars but also to managers and policymakers. We therefore encourage reviewers to help authors express their contributions persuasively, delineate the boundaries of the phenomena under study, and present a coherent and compelling narrative of significance.

By championing manuscripts that embody these three values, reviewers do more than assess them. They help cultivate the soil from which generative scholarship grows, sustaining *EMJ*'s role as a journal where diverse ideas are nurtured, refined, and advanced for the broader management and organization research community.

3. The C.E.D.A.R. tree: rooting peer review in generative practices

EMJ's ethos of critical inquiry, pluralism, and accessibility takes living form through the practices of its reviewers. The C.E.D.A.R. framework illustrates how these values evolve from an inner orientation to outward behavior, showing how reviewing becomes not a mechanical task but a craft of scholarly care. The metaphor of the cedar tree captures this process.

The cedar metaphor is deliberate. Unlike a mechanical cycle, a tree grows organically: its roots draw nourishment from shared soil and its canopy shelters a thriving ecosystem. Similarly, reviewing at *EMJ* is a living craft that both draws from and sustains a scholarly community. The five roots of the C.E.D.A.R. tree are Curiosity, Empathy, Developmental judgment, Actionable guidance, and Reflexive reflection. These roots draw nourishment from *EMJ*'s intellectual soil and, in turn, sustain the canopy of generative peer review, embodying a culture of rigor that is both caring and developmental.

Root 1: Curiosity. Good reviewing begins not with judgment but with curiosity. In the spirit of critical inquiry, reviewers approach manuscripts as opportunities to learn, not as puzzles to be solved or flaws to be detected. Curiosity fuels developmental generosity, the willingness to see potential before it is perfected. Ragins (2015) refers to this as the essence of developmental reviewing: helping authors think more clearly rather than simply complying with expectations. McMullen and Newbert (2023) similarly portray reviewers as intellectual co-investors who nurture emerging ideas to maturity. In practice, this root asks reviewers to begin with intellectual hospitality. Before offering critique, they should scope the paper's intent and contribution: What problem does it address? What conversation does it join? What might it add? Concrete habits include reading the manuscript end-to-end once before critiquing (Hughes et al., 2023), evaluating significance alongside method (Leung et al., 2014), and distinguishing between fatal and fixable issues (Sridhar, 2025). Curiosity transforms reviewing from

error-hunting into exploration. It expands the reviewer's interpretive horizon, allowing critical inquiry to be exercised constructively rather than defensively. When reviewers enter a text with generous curiosity, they create the conditions for generative reviews that recognize not just what a paper is but what it could become.

Root 2: Empathy. The second root translates *EMJ*'s value to pluralism into the act of reading. Empathic interpretation means approaching a manuscript on its own terms, understanding what kind of scholarly work it aspires to be, and evaluating it accordingly. Empathy here is not sentimentality but a disciplined form of reflexivity: awareness of one's own paradigmatic position and its influence on interpretation (Brewis, 2018; Jones & Gatrell, 2014). Pluralism thrives when reviewers practice epistemic openness, acknowledging that rigor takes different forms across traditions (Bedeian, 2004; Renwick et al., 2019). Krlev and Spicer (2023) describe this stance as epistemic respect: the effort to engage unfamiliar paradigms by their own criteria. Practical enactment involves identifying the paper's type (conceptual, empirical, methodological, critical), mapping one's own assumptions, and articulating the paper's promise before pointing to its problems. Empathic framing resists the tendency to rewrite papers in one's own image. It is an exercise in interpretive fairness, ensuring that innovative or non-Anglophone voices are not disadvantaged by hidden standards of normality (Lee et al., 2013). When reviewers frame empathically, they enact pluralism as a scholarly practice, expanding what constitutes a valuable contribution and allowing diverse approaches to coexist within a journal's intellectual scope.

Root 3: Developmental judgment. All reviewing involves judgment, but developmental judgment transforms evaluation into dialogue rather than verdict. This root expresses *EMJ*'s value of critical inquiry not as boundary policing but as a process of mutual learning. A developmental reviewer asks: Is this manuscript promising enough to warrant further development? If so, what is the most efficient path from promise to contribution (Ragins, 2015)? Dialogical critique is the operative quality here, a form of critique that clarifies, challenges, and strengthens through conversation (Hughes et al., 2023; Paltridge, 2017). Tone matters as much as content. Dahlgren (2022) warns how the archetypal "Reviewer 2" derails creativity by wielding authority. In contrast, dialogical critique transforms feedback into generative exchange, maintaining rigor while preserving the author's dignity and motivation. Practical ways to exercise developmental judgment include: (1) prioritizing conceptual over stylistic issues (Hughes et al., 2023), (2) distinguishing fatal flaws from remediable ones, and (3) offering strategic rather than exhaustive guidance to focus revision efforts. McMullen and Newbert (2023) note that such selectivity signals intellectual partnership rather than judgmental distance. When reviewers adopt a developmental judgment, peer review becomes a shared inquiry rather than a one-sided assessment.

Root 4: Actionable guidance. Even the most insightful diagnosis serves little purpose if it is not communicated constructively. The fourth root grounds *EMJ*'s commitment to accessibility in the practice of ethical stewardship. Accessibility here refers not only to clarity of expression but to the fairness and transparency of reviewer communication. Ethical stewardship entails using the reviewer's power responsibly to clarify rather than confuse, to guide rather than dominate (Lee et al., 2013; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023; Smith, 2006). Writing with actionable guidance means structuring feedback so authors can see both direction and priority. Sridhar (2025) recommends organizing the review like a roadmap: opening with an overall evaluation, highlighting the paper's promise, numbering key points, and separating "must-fix" from "nice-to-fix" suggestions. Additional practices include commenting section-by-section (Forero et al., 2025; Hughes et al., 2023), maintaining a respectful tone, and ending with an encouraging summary. Language is never neutral: tone determines whether critique motivates or demoralizes (Zazgyva et al., 2017). Ethical stewardship thus extends beyond avoiding bias or conflicts of interest; it requires cultivating civility and clarity as scholarly virtues. When reviewers write accessibly,

they democratize expertise, translating complex evaluation into actionable learning.

Root 5: Reflexive reflection. The final root sustains the others. Reviewing does not end when the report is submitted. It continues through reflection. Reflexive reflection enacts *EMJ*'s ethos of stewardship at a meta-level, nurturing not just individual papers but the reviewing community itself. Lindebaum and Jordan (2023) highlight the ethical imbalance between the prestige of publishing and the invisibility of reviewing. Reflection rebalances this by transforming reviewing into a form of professional growth. Reflexivity begins with awareness of positionality (Jones & Gatrell, 2014) and extends to examining one's reviewing patterns: Which assumptions shape my evaluations? Do I consistently favor certain methods, theories, or styles? Krlev and Spicer (2023) caution against epistemic arrogance, which is the belief that one's paradigm defines quality. Concrete practices include maintaining a concise review log, soliciting editor feedback on tone and balance, and periodically revisiting past reviews to identify potential bias or rigidity. As Söderlund and Bakker (2014) argue, reflective reviewers act more like coaches than judges, supportive yet demanding. Reflection thus transforms reviewing from isolated evaluation into collegial mentorship. It also ensures sustainability: a review culture that learns from itself, transmitting good practices to future generations through feedback, training, and recognition (Forero et al., 2025; Sridhar, 2025).

4. From roots to fruits: outcomes of generative peer review

When the roots of curiosity, empathy, judgment, guidance, and reflection take hold, they sustain not only individual reviews but a living ecosystem of generative scholarship. These roots are mutually reinforcing: curiosity without empathy risks superficiality; empathy without judgment becomes indulgent; judgment without guidance turns punitive; and guidance without reflection stagnates. Reflection, in turn, replenishes the soil and ensures that each act of reviewing deepens rather than depletes the collective capacity for scholarly care (Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023; Söderlund & Bakker, 2014).

To make this generative movement concrete, Table 1 connects the roots of the C.E.D.A.R. tree to the fruits they yield through specific, actionable practices. Each root represents a distinct habit of scholarly engagement; when enacted consistently, these habits grow into developmental outcomes that sustain a thriving and humane review culture.

Curiosity and generative peer reviews. When reviewers ground their work in curiosity, the result is reviews that nurture rather than merely judge. Curious reviewers read to discover, not to confirm; they seek the promise within a manuscript before listing its problems. This disposition produces the first fruit: generative peer reviews, distinguished by tone, clarity, and developmental intention. Reviewers who translate curiosity into actionable guidance organize their feedback clearly, provide concrete suggestions, and balance critique with encouragement. Civility and precision thus become instruments of intellectual hospitality (Paltridge, 2017; Sridhar, 2025). As Smith (2006) and Zazgyva et al. (2017) remind us, fairness in feedback is not cosmetic but ethical, transforming rigor into generosity.

Empathy and inclusive scholarship. Empathic interpretation yields the fruit of inclusive scholarship, a research community in which diverse theories, methods, and voices are constructively developed rather than filtered out. Reviewers who empathize with authors' intentions and contexts approach unfamiliar paradigms as opportunities for learning. They assess manuscripts on their own terms, foreground strengths before weaknesses, and recognize the boundaries of their own assumptions. Such empathy does not lower standards; it broadens participation by enabling authors from varied traditions, geographies, and epistemic backgrounds to contribute meaningfully (Jones & Gatrell, 2014; Krlev & Spicer, 2023). Inclusive scholarship, in turn, reinforces the pluralistic soil that sustains *EMJ*'s intellectual vitality.

Developmental judgment and author growth. The root of developmental judgment bears the fruit of author growth. Reviewers who

Table 1
Connecting roots and fruits of generative peer review.

Roots	Actionable Practices (how reviewers enact them)	Fruits (developmental outcomes)
<i>Curiosity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the entire manuscript before judging. • Identify the central problem, contribution, and potential rather than initial flaws. • Distinguish between fatal and fixable issues. • Frame feedback as exploration rather than evaluation. 	Generative peer reviews that surface potential rather than defects; reviews that nurture early-stage ideas and broaden intellectual openness.
<i>Empathy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the manuscript on its own terms: conceptual, empirical, or critical. • Recognize the author's intent and theoretical lens. • Articulate strengths before weaknesses. 	Inclusive scholarship through fair and developmental evaluation that values diverse paradigms, voices, and methodological approaches.
<i>Developmental judgment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a professional, respectful tone that invites dialogue. • Prioritize conceptual clarity and contribution over stylistic perfection. • Focus critique on the "shortest path" from promise to publishability. • Offer proportionate feedback distinguishing major from minor issues. • Treat reviewing as investment in scholarly growth. 	Author growth and enhanced manuscript quality through constructive, targeted, and motivational feedback.
<i>Actionable guidance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize feedback clearly (overview, numbered points, section-level detail). • Offer concrete revisions instead of vague critique. • End with a summary emphasizing both promise and priorities. • Avoid self-serving or excessive demands. 	Generative reviewers who communicate clearly, provide useable direction, and strengthen authors' confidence and competence.
<i>Reflexive reflection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reviewing, reflect on biases, tone, and areas for improvement. • Keep a short review log or request meta-feedback from editors. • Adjust practices based on past experience. • Mentor early-career scholars through co-reviewing or feedback sharing. 	Scholarly mentorship and a generative ecosystem where reflection sustains reviewer learning, community trust, and long-term cultural renewal.

Source: own elaboration

prioritize conceptual clarity and theoretical contribution over stylistic perfection create proportionate, constructive feedback (McMullen & Newbert, 2023; Ragins, 2015). By distinguishing between major and minor issues and explaining the developmental logic behind their comments, reviewers transform evaluation into mentorship. Authors leave the process with stronger manuscripts, deeper theoretical insight, and greater methodological confidence (Forero et al., 2025; Hughes et al., 2023). This fruit reflects the pedagogical power of well-calibrated judgment.

Actionable guidance and generative reviewers. Providing actionable guidance cultivates generative reviewers, that is, scholars who learn through the very act of reviewing. Translating developmental intent into clear, implementable advice requires reflective articulation, sharpening analytical discernment and theoretical reasoning (Forero

et al., 2025; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023). Over time, the discipline of structuring helpful feedback becomes a cognitive apprenticeship in judgment and ethics. Each review, therefore, improves not only the manuscript but also the reviewer's own scholarly craft, producing an ever more capable and caring reviewing community.

Reflexive reflection, scholarly mentorship, and ecosystem renewal. The root of reflexive reflection yields two interdependent fruits: scholarly mentorship and a generative ecosystem. Reviewers who pause after submitting reports to examine tone, bias, and interpretive stance develop moral and epistemic awareness that extends beyond a single manuscript. They mentor others through co-reviewing, share learning within editorial teams, and help cultivate a culture of developmental care (Lewin, 2014). As these reflexive practices accumulate, they renew the soil of *EMJ*'s ethos and sustain a self-reinforcing ecology of stewardship (Lee et al., 2013; Söderlund & Bakker, 2014). Senior scholars model humility and generosity; early-career reviewers internalize reflective discipline; and editors coordinate coherence across reports. Through this cyclical renewal, reviewing evolves from obligation into mutual care.

At this ecosystemic level, the C.E.D.A.R. metaphor reaches its full meaning. Like the cedar tree, *EMJ*'s review culture grows slowly but sturdily, nourished by shared soil and generative roots. Its canopy shelters pluralism. Its branches bear the fruits of author growth, generative reviews and reviewers, mentorship, and a sustainable ecosystem. As Klev and Spicer (2023) observe, pluralistic reviewing guards innovation against premature orthodoxy, whereas reflection ensures renewal (Forero et al., 2025; Lewin, 2014).

From roots to fruits is therefore more than a metaphor. It is a manifesto. Reviewing, when practiced through curiosity, empathy, judgment, guidance, and reflection, becomes an act of growth-keeping. The ultimate fruits are not only better papers but a more humane and enduring scholarly ecosystem. One that embodies *EMJ*'s vision of research that is rigorous yet open, coherent yet plural, and demanding yet kind.

5. From peer review to scholarly citizenship: a call to generative practices

Good reviewing is more than a task. It is a way of inhabiting the academy. It situates us in a community of judgment and care, where we shape ideas and, in doing so, shape ourselves. As Smith (2006) reminds us, peer review, however imperfect, remains our "least-worst" mechanism for safeguarding scholarly quality. Its value lies not in procedural perfection but in the integrity, humility, and responsibility with which we practice it. Lindebaum and Jordan (2023) describe reviewing as an ethical obligation that must be institutionally recognized if the reviewer's common thread is to survive the accelerating pressures of output and speed. Söderlund and Bakker (2014) make this reciprocity concrete: the field flourishes only when contributions to its output are matched by contributions to its stewardship. Seen in this light, reviewing is not an invisible service but scholarship-in-practice. It constitutes an investment in the shared infrastructure of knowledge, which, as McMullen and Newbert (2023) note, compounds over time for authors, reviewers, and journals alike.

Scholarly citizenship also travels through mentorship and shared practice. It begins with small, teachable acts such as inviting doctoral students to co-review, narrating how we distinguish between promise and problem, or modeling tone and proportionality in our comments (Forero et al., 2025; Hughes et al., 2023). Developmental reviewing, as Ragins (2015) observed, advances both author and reviewer by turning critique into a collegial conversation. Reviewing also pays personal dividends: it sharpens conceptual thinking, hones writing, and deepens reflexivity, as each review becomes a mirror that reveals our assumptions about rigor, relevance, and fairness.

Yet citizenship also requires supportive institutions. Journals and universities can reduce the transaction costs of good practice by offering

training sessions, rubrics, and clinics on developmental tone and proportional critique (Forero et al., 2025; Hughes et al., 2023). Recognition mechanisms such as credits, certificates, workload models, and awards align personal incentives with collective needs (Lindebaum & Jordan, 2023). Editors, for their part, can close the feedback loop by commenting on reviews and assembling reviewer teams with complementary expertise, so that authors receive coherent, dialogical guidance rather than discordant monologues (Söderlund & Bakker, 2014; Sridhar, 2025). Our editorial experience confirms that reviewers are more likely to accept invitations when they perceive reviewing as a developmental opportunity for themselves, enhancing their scholarly profile, refining their writing, and expanding their professional networks. Reviewing thus becomes both a contribution to collective stewardship and a pathway to editorial service and leadership within the field.

This vision aligns directly with *EMJ*'s call for responsible, pluralistic, and reflexive scholarship. *EMJ*'s ethos depends on reviewers who view their role not as gatekeepers but as field builders. The C.E.D.A.R. tree embodies this ethos. Roots in curiosity and empathy foster inclusive scholarship; roots in developmental judgment and actionable guidance nurture author growth, generative peer reviews, and generative reviewers; and the root of reflexive reflection sustains scholarly mentorship and a generative ecosystem in which reviewing is recognized, taught, and valued (McMullen & Newbert, 2023; Ragins, 2015; Sridhar, 2025). Above this system, pluralism forms the canopy, providing the conditions that shelter diversity and intellectual renewal across the field.

We therefore close not with a rule but with an invitation: *What kind of reviewer - and scholar - do you want to be?*

If reviewing is a form of citizenship, then adopting and sharing the C.E.D.A.R. framework is a simple act of public-spirited scholarship. Discuss it with co-authors. Coach doctoral students through it. Bring it to editorial boards as a shared language for constructive practice. In doing so, we move from reviewing as private, invisible labor to a public craft that carries the signature of *EMJ*'s values.

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