Series Editor's Note

It's funny to me that folks consider it a choice to Bayes or not to Bayes. It's true that Bayesian statistical logic is different from a traditional frequentist logic, but it's not really an either/or choice. In my view, Bayesian thinking has permeated how most modern modeling of data occurs, particularly in the world of structural equation modeling (SEM). That being said, having Sarah Depaoli's guide to Bayesian SEM is a true treasure for all of us. Sarah literally guides us through all ways that a Bayesian approach enhances the power and utility of latent variable SEM. Accessible, practical, and extremely well organized, Sarah's book opens a worldly window into the latent space of Bayesian SEM.

Although her approach does assume some familiarity with Bayesian concepts, she reviews the foundational concepts for those who learned statistical modeling under the frequentist rock. She also covers the essential elements of traditional SEM, ever foreshadowing the flexibility and enhanced elements that a Bayesian approach to SEM brings. By the time you get to Chapter 5, on measurement invariance, I think you'll be fully hooked on what a Bayesian approach affords in terms of its powerful utility, and you won't be daunted when you work through the remainder of the book. As with any statistical technique, learning the notation involved cements your understanding of how it works. I love how Sarah separates the necessary notation elements from the pedagogy of words and examples.

In my view, Sarah's book will be received as an instant classic and a go-to resource for researchers going forward. With clearly developed code for each example (in both M*plus* and R), Sarah removes the gauntlet of learning a challenging software package. She provides wonderful overviews of

each chapter's content and then leads you along the path of learning and understanding. After your learning journey through an example analysis, she brilliantly provides a mock results write-up to facilitate dissemination of your own work. And her final chapter is a laudatory culmination of dos and don'ts, pitfalls and solutions.

At a conference in the Netherlands organized by one of the leading Bayesian advocates, Rens van de Schoot, I reworked the lyrics to "Ring of Fire" and performed (very poorly) "Ring of Priors":

Bayes Is a Burning Thing, and It Makes a Fiery Ring
Bound by **Prior Knowledge**, I Fell in to a Ring of **Priors**

I Fell in to a Burning Ring of **Priors**
I Went Down, Down, Down but the **Posteriors** Went Higher
And It Burns, Burns, Burns, the Ring of **Priors**, the Ring of **Priors**

The Taste of **Knowledge** Is Sweet When Minds Like Ours Do Meet
We Fell for **Bayes** Like a Child, and the **Priors**, They Went Wild

As you embark on your journey to becoming a proficient Bayesian structural equation modeler, you'll fall in love with it (and won't be able to get this little parody out of your head). As always, enjoy! You'll be grateful you took the Bayesian plunge with Sarah's book as your life raft.

TODD D. LITTLE
Isolating at my "Wit's End" retreat
Lakeside, Montana

Guilford Publications
370 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212-431-9800
800-365-7006
www.guilford.com