



Joseph E. LeDoux,

# Celebrating the career of Joseph E. LeDoux

From friends & colleagues



Dear Joe,

I remember during one of our short conversations, you said it was probably your fault that I've been stuck in your lab for so long. I understand why you said that, but now I want to tell you—I couldn't be prouder to be the second-longest follower of Joe LeDoux after Claudia, standing by your side for 29 years. Yes, I have no regrets about not pursuing much with my M.D. degree because it brought me to a brilliant mind like yours—someone who has inspired countless thinkers in neuroscience, psychology, and beyond. It's humbling to have contributed even a little to the remarkable impact you've had on the world, attracting neuroscientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, philosophers, artists, and musicians alike. What an amazing pond of influence you've created.

You are right—I'm indeed brainwashed by your conscious theory approach, and I'm thankful for it. It has profoundly changed my hidden character since Rethinking Emotional Brains and No Self, No Fear. By understanding the relationship between my subjective feelings and the world, I am now more

satisfied and content with what I have, living with gratitude. For that, I have to thank you for helping me discover my own religion of inner happiness.

Most people from China in my generation have a common standard to define success or achievement. But for me, my 29-year journey by your side is my greatest achievement. I don't say this to comfort myself for what I may have missed, but because of the words you wrote to me: "Mian, you are a wonderful friend. It has been a pleasure to be on this journey with you." How many people can say they've received such a heartfelt remark from Joseph LeDoux?

Joe, your legacy will live on, and you are forever young in the conscious parts of my mind! It's been an incredible 29 years as one of your loyal followers, and I'm so happy to grow older alongside you. I'll be right by your side cheering at your 100th birthday rock concert! 🎸🎉

Mian Hou



Group Photo LeDoux Festschrift  
12/07/2024



Dear Joe  
You had a profound impact on my life!!!  
Not been just a mentor but a friend and a source of inspiration!!!  
Thank you for your guidance, kindness and incredible legacy you leave behind!!!  
I am incredibly thankful for the meaningful experiences and connections that have come from being part of your lab!!!  
Beijos

Raquel Martinez



The Great Minds

Dear Joe,  
After working with you for 37 years, you still invoke a bit of fear in me, and I know you enjoy my startle reaction. But underneath your scary façade, you are down to earth, kind, considerate, thoughtful, generous, and loyal. You model what a great PI should be: you trust your lab members and give them the kind of independence that fosters growth, always show respect for people and their ideas, never raise your voice, and are generous with giving credit. It's been a great ride going from the basement in Cornell, when few people studied the amygdala, to the amygdala field exploding. And despite your rise to fame, you remain as accessible, kind, and grounded as ever. Thank you for the journey and every day of those 37 years.

Claudia

**claudia farb**

Joe, I still remember my first day at NYU being interviewed by you before my job talk. You were still setting up your new lab at NYU and I was so intimidated by you and Claudia. Thirty years later, I just want to say thank you for always being an inspiration. For showing how neuroscience and psychology go together, for blazing a trail so many of us have tried to follow. With boundless admiration and many thanks, Paul Glimcher

**Paul Glimcher**



Found this pic from my thesis defense party. With much gratitude for supporting my career from the very beginning! -Kevin

**Kevin LaBar**

VERY DEAR JOE, I WISH TO THANK YOU WHOLEHEARTEDLY FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS OF CLOSE, UNIQUE FRIENDSHIP AND SCIENTIFIC INSPIRATION, AND FOR THOSE MOMENTS WHERE EVEN A FEW WORDS MEAN A LOT. LOVE TO YOU AND NANCY, FROM RINA AS WELL. AND THE REST - IN THE FESTSCHRIFT. 🌸❤️🌸

**YADIN DUDAI**



*Happy Birthday, Joe. Thank you for your amazing work and for your generosity and friendship over the years. So glad we could honor you with the 2023 Music has Power Award. Enjoy this next chapter and all the music making ahead.*

*Connie Tomaino*

*Dear Joe,  
Anxiety may indeed be the price we pay for freedom... and in retirement, it may be the price for deciding what to do with all that free time. I'm confident your autozoetic capacities will navigate that problem space sagaciously and I wish you the best.*

*Warmest Regards,*

*Clark Roberts*



06/05/2023



Dear Joe,  
Thank you for believing in me and taking me on as your student. I feel fortunate to have joined your lab in the beginning, before your rise to "stardom" so I could appreciate your progression from the humble beginnings of the Kips Bay Bldg. I am most thankful for having an advisor who was open to ideas and to surprising results that did not always align with our hypotheses. Your honesty and integrity in reporting all the data showed me the scientist I want to be. I also admire the strength you displayed throughout the many years I have known you. Warm wishes for all good things in the future,  
Liz R.

**Liz Romanski**



Hey Joe,  
 It was an honor, an enriching experience and an all around blast to direct and edit the documentary on your life, work and music. It may have taken a bit longer than we all expected but I think it's a piece that entertains and educates. It is a celebration of who you are and what you have accomplished that will be available for digital eternity. It is a pleasure to know you and call you a friend. And you're a damn good cook too.

All the best,  
 Kurt

**Kurt Feldhun**



Dear Joe,  
 From your willingness in the late 1990s during SFN to move from the peace and quiet of your bar stool to our rowdy table of neuroscientists and friends at a local pub TO your willingness last year to support our SFN-BrainFactors sponsored event by sharing your life story and performing with the Amygdaloids at a local DC pub (see photo), you have been a generous and valued colleague and friend. Your foundational discoveries on threat related circuitry and behavior have inspired and informed much of my thinking and research on the adolescent brain and behavior.

Thank you!  
 BJ

**BJ Casey**



Dear Joe  
 Thank you for your teaching and support over the past many years. The world is full of threat but I had no fear when I knew you had my back. I also thank you for sharing your knowledge and wisdom with many Korean viewers during your appearance in the Great Minds by EBS.

I am hopeful that you would continue to be my mentor even though Amygdala will certainly miss you.

**June-Seek Choi**

Dear Joe,

Thank You for opening up a whole new world to me, in connecting music and science- reminding me that like music, science requires patience, repetition, imagination, and critical thinking. You have shared your groundbreaking work in an articulate and poetic way, making a lasting impact.

With Gratitude,

Ittai

**Ittai Shapira**

*In the words of a great thinker:*

*"They say it's hard to figure out  
 Those special things that we're about  
 We've got flesh and bone, heart and  
 brain  
 But is that all that we can claim?"*

*We are really, just things of this  
 world  
 In space and time we each unfurl  
 Someday scientists will reveal  
 Just what it means to know and to  
 feel"*

*You brought us a few steps closer to  
 understanding ourselves.*

*It's been a wild and fun ride working  
 with you, Joe. Let's keep on riding  
 that train.*

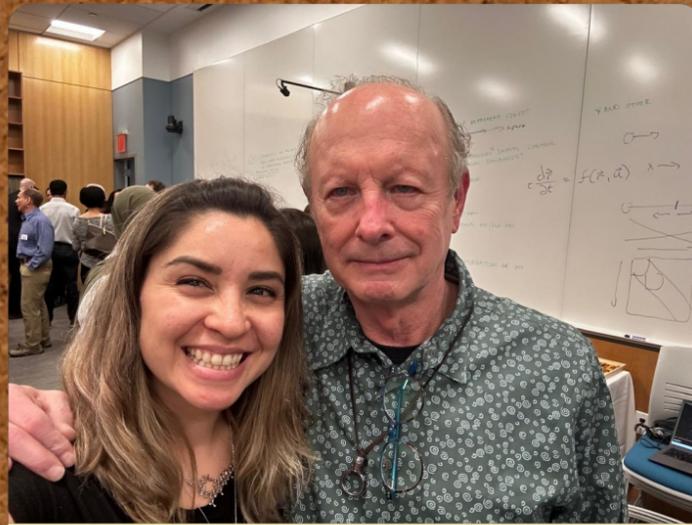
Stefan

**Stefan Hofmann**

Dear Joe,

I remember clearly you first introducing yourself to me in the halls of CNS, and from there started a very enjoyable adventure into science. I was lucky to have joined with you after such a beautiful system had been set up by you and your students, and the clarity of your vision was inspiring. Your light handed guidance was important in many ways, both personal and professional. And your continued support as I moved into clinical work and the startup world was deeply appreciated. Best wishes for many good years ahead!

**Michael Rogan**



*Little did I know I would one day have the privilege of working with my ultimate hero. Joe, your influence has unquestionably set me on the path I'm on today. I will always be thankful for enabling me to follow my curiosity and begin studying the crazy gut microbiota. Thank you for taking the risk and believing in me.*

*Your science has been a core inspiration since I first learned how to read papers, and I'm sure it will continue to inspire me in the future... Looking forward to your upcoming books*

*I'm truly honored to be part of your incredible legacy.*

*Wishing you all the best in your next chapter,*

**Javi Oyarzun**



Hi Joe,  
being in your lab and talking with you changed my vision on neuroscience and emotions. The relevance of the data and the way to interpret the results in the simplest way. I also learnt the flexibility to reconsider hypothesis that apparently seemed to be stronger and needed to be reformulated. The entire team helped me a lot and the picture of Xmas 96/97 is still over the screen of my PC. Unfortunately can't go this time but hope to see you again soon. All the best.

**Paco Olucha**



*Dearest Joe,  
Thank you so much for taking me on as your doctoral student and supporting me. You are the most brilliant person I have ever met, and it has been one of the biggest honors of my career to learn from you and work with you. How amazing you also advised my student Walter's dissertation many years later! Your lab family has been so good to me over the years and some of my strongest memories are the bonds we nurtured after traumatic loss and grief. Huge thanks to Claudia and Mian for this picture of my defense in 2003! Congratulations on all your successes! May all your post-retirement dreams come true. Best wishes,*

**Sarina Saturn (née Rodrigues)**

Dear Joe,

Thank you for suggesting that I apply for the assistant professor job at the Center for Neural Science, NYU. Here I am, 34 years later, loving this place, loving my colleagues, surrounded by many students I have the privilege to teach, in the City of New York! I thank you every day. Also, by watching you, I gained the courage to take a plunge into the most mysterious and wondrous inquiry about the mind - the neurobiology of emotion. Thank you so much, Joe. You are proof that a person can be the great scientist and also be the nicest person - fun, nurturing, generous, kind, lovable! Wishing you many many many more years of fun and discoveries.

**Chiye Aoki**



Dear Joe, Thank you for all your support and guidance over the years. The time I spent in your lab was a highlight of my career, and I'll always consider you (and Eric) my two original "lab Dads." You gave me the freedom to find my footing, test my ideas, and by the end of grad school, excel as a scientist. I launched my career with confidence because of everything I learned from you during that time.

**Kiriana Cowansage**



*projects focused on emotional memory, associative learning, and even consciousness. I hope to contribute meaningfully to this fascinating field, just as you have.*

*Thank you again for being such a pivotal mentor in my journey. And happy birthday to you~*

**Joy (Yiran) Gu**

Dear Joe,

*I want to express my deepest gratitude for accepting me as your student. That decision truly changed the course of my life. Your unwavering support and kindness have guided me to follow my passion for research in the amygdala field.*

*Emotional memory is such amazing, I still vividly remember the first time we met in your office. You commented that I seemed "anxious" to start my experiments. At first, I misunderstood and said I wasn't anxious at all, but then you smiled and explained that "anxious" also means eager or filled with aspiration. That moment stayed with me and continues to inspire me. Because of your profound influence, I am now leading lab*

Dear Joe,

I don't even know where to start. If it wasn't for you, I probably would not be at NYU! I can still remember sitting in your office and you telling me not to worry about being the first molecular neuroscientist (other than you!) in the department and that being in CNS would make my science better.....and of course you were correct! Eighteen years later, your work still inspires much of what we do and I look forward to getting our last couple of co-authored manuscripts published. It's been an honor to be your colleague, collaborator, and friend. Thanks for everything!

**Eric Klann**

Dear Joe,

Thank you for being a fantastic mentor to me during my grad school years. The depth of your wisdom and the clarity of your guidance truly helped me grow as a scientist and as a professional. Moreover, the philosophical nuance that you taught us all to embrace is absolutely vital. You helped me launch a neuroscience career that is becoming more impactful than I ever thought possible.

Best wishes,  
Walter

**Walter Piper**

Dear Joe,

*Thank you for being a special and wonderful colleague and friend. Thank you for your exceptional science. Your work inspired the research of my lab for many years. Memory reconsolidation is one of the most important and intriguing processes of memory. Your vision opened the door to such a big question and changed how we think about memory. You greatly inspired me also as a colleague.*

*Thank you. I am looking forward to sharing future times. With Gratitude. Many Congratulations.*

**Cristina Alberini**

Dear Joe,

I would probably be a psychiatrist if it wasn't for you. I was well on my way to medical school when I stumbled upon your work in college. You made me realize it was more important (for me) to work on the brain, and that it was possible to do so in great detail. And then you took me in and taught me not to get lost in molecules and circuits, but to hold on to the big picture.

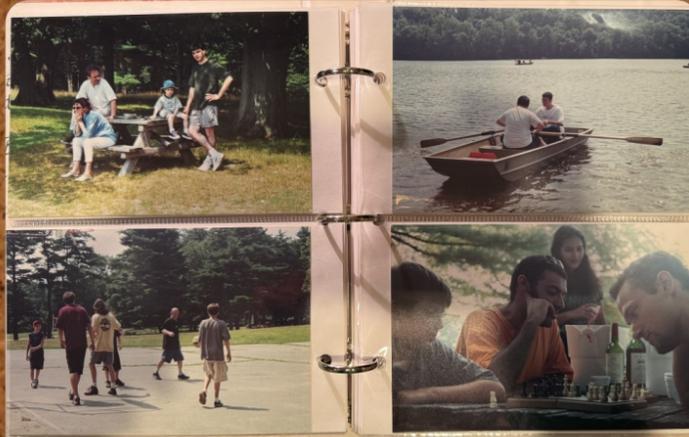
Thank you for all your guidance and all of the opportunities you given me over the years. Not only are you one of the most brilliant thinkers of our time, you are also one of the kindest and most generous.

Thank you.

**Rob Sears**

Thank you for being an amazing and supportive friend. I will always be grateful for you ♥♥♥ if it wasn't for your support of my book it may never have been published. Thank you for believing in me.

**Max Bennett**



Dear Joe,

I am glad I have this chance to thank you for the opportunity that you gave me to do research in your lab as an undergraduate. It was in your lab that I first heard cells, and from that moment, I was hooked! Your lab was a fantastic place to learn what being in a lab was all about, and I loved it. It has led to what I hope is a long career in neuroscience for myself.

Warmly and with gratitude,

~Theresa

p.s. I couldn't find a photo of you and I, but in looking through some old albums I found these of a lab picnic in the summer of 2000. I think they capture the great atmosphere.

**Theresa Desrochers**

Thank you Joe for your inspiring career that more than you know, has guided mine.

You planted the seed, that I might consider moving to NYU. Then a year later, your encouragement was instrumental in sealing the deal.

I've been grateful and admiring of how you manage to be economic in what you say, and generous in what you do.

Thank you for sharing your space where we built electrodes for a decade, and sharing your space that we turned into a quarantined-mouse behavioral room, and then a paper just before the pandemic, and thank you most recently for being instrumental in my induction to the AAA&S.

Your clarity of thought, scientific honesty, and cultural engagement are all high bars I will continue to strive to reach.

Thank you for the mentorship, your generous spirit, and quiet leadership. I am excited to keep learning from you, now that you will be doing the next phase of your truly marvelous career and life.

**André Fenton**



Joe!

It's hard to believe that it has been 25 years since I started my Phd in your lab at NYU. This picture is from my graduation party, with Torfi and the Amygdaloids. I think we were doing All along the watchtower :)

You have been an inspiration, both as a scientist and a human being. Thanks for your support and friendship.

-Jeff

**Jeffrey Erlich**



Dear Joe,

Nearly every aspect of my career in science has been influenced in some way by you, your work, and my time in your lab. Your foundational work on amygdala circuits forms the heart of my research program, and I owe my maturation as a scientist to the freedom you allowed me within the rich and inspiring environment you nurtured in your lab. I will be forever grateful for your support and the example you set.

*Linnaea Ostroff*

Dear Joe,

Thanks for accepting me to your lab all those years ago and taking a chance on a psychology major with no lab experience. You gave me my first break in science and I am forever grateful for all your support throughout the years. Your work and scientific approach was what got me interested in neuroscience in the first place and it continues to be a source of inspiration to this day. I consider myself extremely lucky to have been able to work with you in the pathbreaking and fun lab that you created at NYU. I hope we will continue to hear from you in the future through your words and music.

Warmest wishes,  
Torfi

*Torfi Sigurdsson*



Joe,

Congratulations on this milestone. Thank you for giving me a chance and supporting me at every stage. Thank you for your time, generosity and wisdom. I hope you enjoy the years ahead!

**Vincent Campese**

Joe, my life would be so different without the time I spent in your lab. Thank you for supporting me in my pursuit of neuroscience and then, writing. It was really special to be in a lab where the arts are valued just as much as the sciences. Thanks for giving me the freedom to try them both. Congratulations on your retirement. Play lots of music!

**JoAnna Klein**

DEAR JOE-

THANK YOU FOR MAKING SO MUCH POSSIBLE. I THINK BACK ON GRAD SCHOOL AND THE LEDOUX LAB AS A QUITE GOOD STEP (OR TWO) ALONG LIFE'S PATH. VMPFC, RATS AND MORE RATS, RUSSELL PHILLIPS WHERE ARE YOU??, AND ALWAYS THE EXTINCTION. THE MINDSET OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY -- ITS SIMPLICITY, LOGIC, AND INTEGRITY -- CONTINUE TO GUIDE MY THINKING. THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND AND GENTLE LEADERSHIP. SEE YOU DOWN THE ROAD.  
MARIA

**MARIA MORGAN**



Karim Nader and Joe LeDoux, 12/6/2024

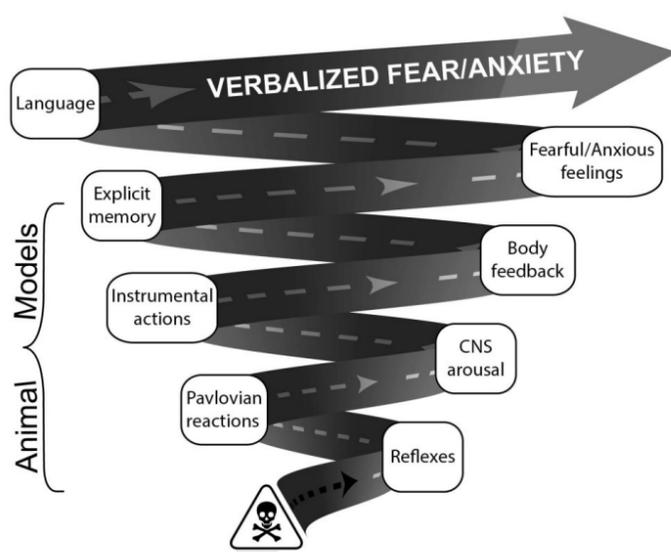


Joe, what a wonder to get to meet you and the wholeness of your work and life! It's inspirational and just downright cool. Thrilled Max connected us... and I look forward to continuing to get to know you and if all goes well work on a movie version of Map of the World together!

Happy peaceful next quarter of a century!

Alyssa

**Alyssa Rallo Bennett**



Dear Joe,

I got my first passport after joining your lab for an amazing trip to Cambridge University during their 800th (!) anniversary. I think I walked by Darwin's house. I vividly remember punting down the river with David Bush and laughing the whole way. Later I talked science outside a pub with you and Trevor Robbins and the moment was truly surreal. I have so many great memories with you and all the incredible people you attracted. What you built is rare and I loved being a part of it.

Congratulations on an incredible career and thank you so much for all you've done for me and my family.

p.s. remember my fear tornado? Not quite what you had in mind and you politely declined to put it in the chapter 😊

Chris Cain

Joe,  
I will be forever grateful for the gift of your friendship, mentorship, and, most importantly, your humanity. Society is entering a time when fear will dominate other dimensions of our existence more than during the past decades. Putting reason into fear, a big part of your academic scholarship and legacy will be one of the most important defenses against what awaits us all, including progressing climate and planetary breakdown, the growth of authoritarianism, and, likely, civilizational collapse. Your legacy will play a part in helping us stay calm during the storms, understand our fears, process them, see and have more choices, and hopefully, courageously face the challenges.

I look forward to seeing and hearing the coming fruits of your creative, scholarly, and artistic paths that you generously share with all of us. I wish you, Nancy, Milo, and his family much love. Enjoy the next chapter of your life. Congratulations on your retirement, and Happy birthday, Joe!

Jacek Debiec



Cambridge 2009. Great trip!

Chris Cain



Joseph LeDoux: A Life in Two Rhythms

From Louisiana's roots, with music in his veins, He found emotion's pulse while

living on the plains.

A van became his home, as thoughts began to flow,  
The brain's deep mysteries, where feelings rise and grow.

Through decades of research, he decoded its song,  
How threats are learned, how memories prolong.  
Yet when the lab doors closed, a different beat arose,  
With The Amygdaloids, he'd rock and strike a pose.

Now, as he retires, the science still unfolds,  
But the music he makes is where his spirit holds.  
From neurons to notes, from study to sound,  
His life is a fusion, where knowledge and rhythm are bound.

Cheers to Joe, it was a blast being part of the LeDoux lab in the golden years - and it worked out for me in more ways than one, having also found love in your lab. I guess you have a real gift for bringing people together. Rock on Joe - I am sure there will be more wisdom and tunes for all of us to look forward to. Thanks for everything! xx Miek (Annemieke Apergis-Schoute).

Miek

Hey Joe,  
I remember clearly the time when I slotted a quarter into one of 10 payphones in the silver center on Washington place to make a nervous phone call asking you if there would be spot for me to intern in the lab. You said sure and put me in touch with Chris and Jeff and the rest was history. I was a super shy kid and was suddenly in the Ledoux lab amongst all these amazingly smart and dedicated scientists. It was during those Ledoux glory days that I learned everything I needed to become a scientist. Dedication, patience, and an open ear to learn from listening to others. The strength of the lab was your selection of all these really great committed thinkers that loved doing and talking about science. A family for sure that got bigger and bigger every year that I am proud and honoured to be a part of. Of course I was blessed to meet the amazing Miek while in the lab and life with her continues to get better every day. Thank you Joe, for the opportunity, for the support and for all the amazing people that you've brought into all of our lives. Thanks fo it all.  
Much love from us and if you're again in Cambridge UK let us know for a pint and open mic .

*John Apergis-Schoute*



*journey. -Neot*

Dear Joe,  
I'm still processing what happened this weekend - I'm still in awe as to how you, as quiet as I remember you were, managed to get so many fine ppl you have touched along the way throughout the years to come together and congratulate you for your retirement. However, from this weekend's events, it looked like you are far from retiring... it felt that you didn't finish making your mark and touching so many ppl along your way. I also learned that the use of X became quite popular when studying the role of the amygdala in "threat conditioning" - hence an additional X for you in the photo attached ;)  
Happy birthday Joe and a happy next/new chapter in your

**Neot Doron-Repa**



Thank you for letting me be part of the experience in your lab. Your kind guidance and wisdom have shaped my journey. Wishing you all the best in the music and emotional consciousness ahead!

**Francisco Sotres-Bayon**



**Joe's First and Last Graduate Students**



Dear Joe,  
This was the very first gig of "The Limbic Tones" (AKA the amygdaloids) in 2006. Who would have thought that 18 years later we would still be playing! this has been an incredible journey, full of surprises and amazing adventures, some totally mind boggling (e.g., playing MSG!!). Not less so was the scientific journey that your work has inspired and led to real impact on real people suffering from trauma. Thank you for the inspiration, the mentorship, and the friendship, all of which I will forever cherish.

Daniela

*Daniela Schiller*



View online at  
[thankbox.com](https://thankbox.com)

**thankb****x**