

The Proust Questionnaire has its origins in a parlor game popularized by Marcel Proust, the French essayist and novelist, who believed that, in answering these questions, an individual reveals his or her true nature.

## Proust questionnaire: Ray Lewans, MD



### What profession might you have pursued, if not medicine?

Journalist or judge. "Saying it like it is" is rarely permissible in medicine.

### Which talent would you most like to have?

The ability to convert religious zealots to rationalists.

### What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Making the short list for the 2007 CBC Literary Awards.

### Who are your heroes?

June Callwood, Bill Maher, David Hyde Pierce, Lily Tomlin.

### Who are your favorite writers?

I no longer have time to read books now that we must accumulate 50 hours of CME per year regardless of its relevance to one's practice. Window dressing at its finest.

Dr Lewans, a GP practising in Victoria, has published numerous humorous non-fiction essays. In 2007 his essay "Scoped" made the short list for the CBC Literary Awards.

### What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Seagulls wearing diapers.

### What is your greatest fear?

Acute urinary retention and the re-election of an NDP government, the former possibly precipitated by the latter.

### What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Not being a morning person.

### What characteristic do your favorite patients share?

They are scentless nonsmokers who do not marinate themselves in perfume and who do turn off their cell phones!

### Where would you most like to practise?

Victoria would be just fine if the drug and criminal element were relocated to abandoned mining towns.

### What technological medical advance do you most anticipate?

A safe, effective anti-obesity pill.

### What is your favorite activity?

Eating.

### On what occasion do you lie?

When asked how I am.

### What is your most marked characteristic?

Hyperacute senses.

### What do you most value in your colleagues?

Their willingness to clean off the desk we share at the end of their shifts. Once a pair of jockey underwear was left.

### What is your greatest regret?

Not taking better care of my teeth as a child. Now of course I am obsessive, suffering from what my dentist dubs "floss abuse"—another addition for *DSM-V* no doubt.

### How would you like to die?

Quickly and painlessly but with 2 weeks' notice so I can clean out my closets and storage room and find loving homes for my 64 houseplants.

**Tell us a bit about yourself.** Please complete and submit a Proust Questionnaire—your colleagues will appreciate it.



#### Online

[www.bcmj.org/content/contribute](http://www.bcmj.org/content/contribute)  
Click on the Proust tab, then complete and submit online.



#### E-mail

[journal@bcma.bc.ca](mailto:journal@bcma.bc.ca)  
E-mail and we'll send you a Word document to complete and e-mail back to us.



#### Print

[www.bcmj.org/content/contribute](http://www.bcmj.org/content/contribute)  
Click on the Proust tab, click on "Print a PDF copy," then complete and submit by fax or mail.



#### Mail

604 638-2858  
Call and we'll send you a blank questionnaire to complete and return to us by mail.