

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: Malcolm Brigden, MD



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

Ship's captain or professional mountain guide.

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

A completely photographic memory.

### What do you consider your greatest achievement?

To make it to age 65 well nourished without having been hunted or eaten by anything else.

### Who are your heroes?

My teachers, colleagues, and students.

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

Unctuousness or foppery.

Dr Brigden is medical director of the Algoma district cancer program in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. He practised hematology and oncology in BC for 25 years.

### What characteristic do your favorite patients share?

Passion for life coupled with lively curiosity.

### What is your idea of perfect happiness?

To learn something arcane or new on a daily basis.

### What is your greatest fear?

To have lived an unexamined life.

### Which living physician do you most admire?

Anyone with the gumption to make it through medical school, residency, or both.

### What is your favorite activity?

Spending meaningful time with my wife and extended family.

### On what occasion do you lie?

To preserve dignity of the dying.

### Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

According to my wife: "cool!"

### What medical advance do you most anticipate?

Superconductivity at room temperature—it will change the world as we know it.

### What is your most marked characteristic?

Cautious pragmatism.

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

Enthusiasm and frankness.

### Who are your favorite writers?

John Donne, Thomas Pynchon, Joseph Heller, William Manchester.

### What is your greatest regret?

Not to have traveled more in my youth.

### How would you like to die?

Reading Cicero in the original after an intensive 6-month Latin update at Oxford or Cambridge.

### What is your motto?

*Sine doctrina vita est quasi mortis imago!*

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



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