

## Proust questionnaire: Susan Burgess, MD



**What profession might you have pursued, if not for medicine?**  
Mime, florist, or accountant.

**Which talent would you most like to have?**  
The ability to do gymnastics.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement?**  
Leaving the clinic setting to meet patients where they are.

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Dr Burgess has practised in Vancouver's inner city in home hospice/palliative care, family medicine, and outreach for almost 20 years. Before that she spent many years working in the Northwest Territories, and she has taught at Queen's University. She is currently the acting president of the Vancouver Community Medical Staff Association, an executive of the Vancouver Medical Association, and a clinical associate professor of Family and Community Medicine at UBC. She lives happily in Vancouver with her husband and two daughters.

**Who are your heroes?**  
Jesus and Peter Pan.

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?**  
Sunny days at the cabin with my family.

**What is your greatest fear?**  
Torture.

**What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?**  
Procrastination.

**What characteristic do your favorite patients share?**  
Courage and twinkling eyes.

**Which living physician do you most admire?**  
Dr Balfour Mount.

**What is your favorite activity?**  
Reading.

**On what occasion do you lie?**  
To avoid angry confrontation—but very rarely.

**Which words or phrases do you most overuse?**  
“Okay,” and “Would you like to ...?”

**Where would you most like to practise?**  
*Not* in an office tower.

**What technological medical advance do you most anticipate?**  
Blood tests without the need for venipuncture—my patients have terrible veins!

**What is your most marked characteristic?**  
I make do with what is available, but do it!

**What do you most value in your colleagues?**  
Support and remaining patient focused.

**Who are your favorite writers?**  
J.R.R. Tolkien, Rumi, W.B. Yeats, Louise Penny.

**What is your greatest regret?**  
The loss of my son.

**How would you like to die?**  
Quietly, near family and nature.

**What is your motto?**  
Never give up—we need to do something!

**Submit a Proust Questionnaire**—your colleagues will appreciate it.



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