

## Proust questionnaire: Réka Gustafson, MD



**What profession might you have pursued, if not medicine?**  
Writer.

**Which talent would you most like to have?**  
Singing.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement?**  
My three children.

**Who are your heroes?**  
Alexander Graham Bell, Edward Jenner, and John Snow.

Dr Gustafson, chair of the newly formed Public Health Physician Section of Doctors of BC, is a medical health officer and medical director of communicable disease control in Vancouver and an associate clinical professor in the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. Dr Gustafson is involved in surveillance, prevention, and control of communicable diseases and outbreak investigation and management. Her primary areas of work at this time are HIV, tuberculosis, and outbreak response.

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?**

Not entirely sure, but it involves my family, sunshine, the Mediterranean, and wine.

**What is your greatest fear?**

Flying in a seaplane—not enough pilots or engines.

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

The tendency to open my mouth before engaging my brain.

**What characteristic do your favorite patients share?**

They have lived and bring a perspective from far away.

**Which living physician do you most admire?**  
Paul Gully.

**What is your favorite activity?**

The cool-down walk after a run. There's nothing quite like knowing you don't have to do that again for a couple of days.

**On what occasion do you lie?**

When people ask me about my height.

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

At the end of the day . . .

**What technological medical advance do you most anticipate?**  
Highly effective HIV vaccine.

**What is your most marked characteristic?**  
Clinically Hungarian.

**What do you most value in your colleagues?**  
A sense of humor.

**Who are your favorite writers?**  
Kim Thuy, Ben Elton, and Jane Austen.

**What is your greatest regret?**  
My hairstyle circa 1987, with my wardrobe at the same time a very close second.

**How would you like to die?**  
While sleeping in a hammock in Italy.

**What is your motto?**  
It's not about me.

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