

Proust questionnaire: Dr Bonnie Henry



What profession might you have pursued, if not medicine?

I was really keen on marine biology in undergrad and would have pursued that if I hadn't gotten into medical school. Thankfully I did get into med school because I later found out I get really seasick, which would have made marine biology a poor career choice!

Which talent would you most like to have?

I would love to be able to sing but am constantly reminded that it is not my strength.

Which living physician do you most admire?

I have been so fortunate to have worked with a number of wonderful physician mentors and leaders including my predecessor, Dr Perry Kendall, whom I admire tremendously.

Dr Henry is a public health and preventive medicine specialist who has worked across Canada and internationally on myriad public health issues from Ebola to SARS to the current overdose crisis. She is the author of *Soap and Water & Common Sense* and was appointed to the position of Provincial Health Officer for BC in February 2018.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Mentoring and supporting many brilliant young women and hopefully being a positive role model.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A glass of wine, a good book, and jazz in the background. That and those exceedingly rare moments during a long run when the pain disappears and I feel the flow; unfortunately those moments are fleeting!

What is your greatest fear?

Personally, developing Alzheimer disease. Professionally, I fear antimicrobial resistance and that we will never find a way to stem the tragedy of overdose deaths we are currently experiencing.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Procrastination!

What is your favorite activity?

Running, for my mental and emotional health along with the physical. And more recently, yoga.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

This too shall pass.

Where would you most like to practise?

I have the best job in the country and am happy right where I am, based in

Victoria but with responsibility for the province.

What technological medical advance do you most anticipate?

A cure for Alzheimer disease or, better yet, effective prevention.

What is your most marked characteristic?

I am not very tall! People most often tell me I am always calm (even in a crisis) and talk softly.

What do you most value in your colleagues?

Patience and kindness.

Who are your favorite writers?

Milan Kundera, Ian McEwan, and Madeleine Thien.

What is your greatest regret?

Not being a better communicator to my patients, colleagues, family, and friends.

How would you like to die?

I once worked with the search and rescue team in Comox and we were called to attend someone on the glacier. It was a beautiful, sunny Saturday and an older woman had been out on the mountain hiking with friends. They had just finished a nice lunch and she collapsed and died just as they started down. I have often thought that was a lovely way to go.

What is your motto?

In patience lies wisdom.

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