

# Dr Joshua Greggain, president, Doctors of BC

Dr Greggain answers the Proust Questionnaire, telling us a bit about his life and what drives him.



## Where do you live?

This year, I seem to live in a suitcase. I am trying to balance my time between Vancouver, Victoria, and visiting physicians, hospitals, divisions, and Medical Staff Associations across BC. I have a few locums in rural communities, as time allows. My mail, however, gets sent to Bear Mountain in Langford.

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

In 1997, I spent 3 months in West Africa, trying to discern a career in health care, ministry, or global relief work. So if not medicine, one or both of the others.

## Which talent would you most like to have?

I wish I could play the guitar and sing. I love to camp outdoors, on backpacking trips or in our trailer. There is something romantic about sitting by the fire, playing music together with friends and loved ones.

## What do you consider your greatest achievement?

I will speak in two spheres. Professionally, my greatest achievement was being awarded the BC Family Physician of the Year award in 2021 by the BC College of Family Physicians. Personally, my greatest achievement thus far has been to be married to my wife, Jennifer, for 23 years this year, and to have raised our two children, Darren and Elizabeth.

## Who are your heroes?

My wife, who continually strives for personal and professional greatness and spurs it in me. My father, who continues to be a great man, physician, and leader. My colleagues, who have stood with me over the years through ever-challenging circumstances.

## What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Faith, family, and fidelity are my core values, and if I can achieve those in harmony, then perfect happiness is bound to follow.

## What is your greatest fear?

Irrelevance. I was going to say loneliness, but solitude can be quite refreshing. The fear of not mattering to anyone is my greatest fear.

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

There is not *one* trait I deplore. Every one of my traits, done to the extreme, can be deplorable. So, I aspire to keep them in balance. My extroversion done to extreme can be overwhelming, my optimism done to extreme can be foolish, and my love of food done to extreme can be gluttonous.

## What characteristic do your favorite patients share?

Gratitude. As a physician, I get to share in a lot of difficult circumstances, clinically and personally. I tend to give a lot of energy to my patients, to try to walk with them. When those patients are grateful, in word and action, I can't help but feel as though they are my favorite.

## Which living physician do you most admire?

My father, who continues to devote himself to his work and his family.

## What is your favorite activity?

Adventuring. Whether it be black water rafting in New Zealand, hiking the Juan de Fuca Trail on Vancouver Island, 4x4ing in Australia, or eating octopus on a stick in Kyoto, Japan, I love to adventure.

## On what occasion do you lie?

I am not a good liar, but if I do attempt to lie, it is usually to protect someone from being hurt.

## Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

My wife says I overuse the word *perfect* when talking about a circumstance or an outcome. However, she usually doesn't complain if I call her the same.

## What is your favorite place?

Wherever my family is. Over the past 23 years together, we have lived in two provinces and eight different houses. Additionally, we have traveled either together or separately to six continents. Favorite is not a specific

## PROUST FOR PHYSICIANS

location but a place where we can be together for a while.

### What medical advance do you most anticipate?

The Star Trek medical tricorder that is used by doctors to help diagnose diseases and collect bodily information about a patient, with a detachable handheld high-resolution scanner stored inside. Although currently fictional, it would make diagnostics a lot easier.

### What is your most marked characteristic?

I am outgoing, optimistic, and fun. I generally carry these traits into any room: an exam room, a boardroom, or a party. This makes for a good time no matter the circumstance.

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

Humility, loyalty, and depth of character. I am always impressed when a highly educated physician is able to humble themselves. I am always grateful when I know that my colleagues are committed to a common

purpose. I am always astounded by the depth of my colleagues who surround me.

### What are your favorite books?

1. The Bible that my grandfather annotated during the 25 years he preached in Regina. It is full of scribbles in the margins and comments that are still around years after he passed.

2. *Legacy: What the All Blacks Can Teach Us about the Business of Life*, about the All Blacks rugby team, what it took to turn around the team culture, and the ultimate success that followed.

3. *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* is a book I am currently enjoying about how trust is established and maintained between people and organizations.

### What is your greatest regret?

I don't have any regrets, but I do see opportunities for reflection and growth. I wish I had grown in humility earlier in my career and life; I think I would have seen things differently at a variety of moments—with my marriage, my children, my practice, and my life.

### What is the proudest moment of your career?

In 2021, I was gifted an eagle feather by the Anderson Creek Band from the Nlaka'pamux Nation. I had spent 11 years in the community, providing primary care on reserve to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. I was humbled to receive this gift, as it helped me reflect on everything I had learned from my patients and everything they had learned from me.

### What is your motto?

Depending on the circumstances (all three may apply):

- Perfect.
- Work hard, play harder.
- If you can't change the people, then you need to change the people.

### How would you like to die?

Old, quickly, and surrounded by loved ones. Not *too* old, or *too* quickly, but always surrounded by many loved ones, no matter when that day comes. ■

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