

... with Peter Fonagy

'I would like to abolish silo working'

One moment that changed the course of your career

The moment lasted three and a half years. It was my analysis aged 17 with Anne Hurry at the then Hampstead Child Therapy Clinic (now Anna Freud Centre). She was a superb analyst, particularly for a depressed, isolated adolescent boy. She showed me how to face up to parts of myself that I was uncomfortable with, to say truths that I didn't like and yet retain a sense of myself as worthwhile. And she was very funny to boot.

One person who inspired you

My dad. He spoke more languages than I could name including Sanskrit and could read the hieroglyphics in the British Museum.

One thing that you would change about psychology/psychologists

I would like psychologists to abolish silo working, both in

relation to other professions, but above all in relation to each other. The working of the mind is the most rewarding and important subject of study and it is an incredible privilege to be given the most exciting of subjects as a centrepiece of one's profession. Many psychologists work very well with each other and other professions, but I have met many who do not. We should share our knowledge broadly in the interest of our clients and abandon the guilt we have built up to protect the particular patches of our universe.

One era

I'm very fortunate having been born at the late end of the baby boomer generation. We have had the advantage of a welfare system, subsidised education, contraception, relative peace and in many parts of the world liberalism and enlightenment. My hobby is reading history and quite honestly I can think of no other period where an ordinary person like me had it so good.

One person I would have liked to have met

Montaigne, a French philosopher and essayist. He

was, at least in his writing, incredibly witty and terribly clever. And he cut through numerous Gordian knots with nothing more than an incisive intellect. I particularly like his essay on empiricism.

One regret

Some of the more creative ideas that help progress scientific work that we have done came relatively late in my career. I spent the early years of my career a bit lost in the wilderness. It wasn't until two PhD students focused my attention on attachment and Bowlby that I found the topic in psychology that I was really genuinely interested in.

One book

Heinrich Mann's historical biography of Henry IV of France is one of the books that inspired me to read history for pleasure. For the last 30 years I have only read history books outside of reading I have to do professionally.

One film

Les Enfants du Paradis. It depicts human beings as they really are – sometimes ugly on the outside but beautiful on the inside.

One song/album

I remember in Hungary listening to the Beatles song 'Lady Madonna' and I didn't understand and mispronounced the words because I couldn't speak English. And then the *Sergeant Pepper* album came out and I listened endlessly. That had the words on the inside cover. It was my first proper lesson in English.

One thing I'm ashamed of

I was one of the worst goalies ever.

One alternative career path you may have chosen

Is it a bit boring to say medicine? What I really would like to have been is an

airline pilot. I think I didn't have the right A-levels though.

One hero/heroine from psychology past or present

I met John Bowlby when he was visiting professor at UCL in the 1970s. He was a remarkable man and a highly controversial figure among psychoanalysts but he stood up for empiricism and for children and for identifying the biological basis for understanding behaviour. I am not sure if I liked him as a person – he was somewhat remote and not overly friendly – but in terms of sheer scientific determination and



Jean-Louis Barrault in *Les Enfants du Paradis*

sense of focus I have not seen his equal.

One place I love

A 16th-century farmhouse Briançon. It's about five minutes away from one ski resort, Serre Chevalier, and 20 minutes from another, Montgenèvre. It's owned by my sister and her husband and we go skiing there annually as a family.

One thing I am proud of

I am proud of the decency and humanity of my kids.

One key to my success

I have achieved nothing on my own. Working with teams has been the greatest pleasure and a working team being happy the greatest source of pride.



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