

Proust Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions with short responses.

Name: **Eric Chang**

Age: **42**

Hometown: **Paris, France, and Los Angeles, California**

Current City: **Los Angeles, California**

Current Employer: **Chang Law**

Education: **University of California, Berkeley (BA 1998); Cornell University Law School and Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (Juris Doctor and Maîtrise en droit 2002).**

How did you get involved in international arbitration?

At Cornell Law School, I applied to a joint law degree program with the University of Paris 1, and spent my final two years of law school at the Sorbonne. There, I took a course in international arbitration with Professor Pierre Mayer, which ended up being my favorite course in law school. I could see this was a fascinating field where I could make use of both my civil and common law training. After returning Stateside to pass the New York Bar, I ended up accepting a job offer at a large firm in Paris, and moved right back. I've since worked in international arbitration (both commercial and investor-state) in New York and Los Angeles.

What is your favourite virtue?

Empathy, something sorely lacking in the world today.

What are your favourite qualities in another person?

Also empathy. Honesty, as well. I prefer someone who is blunt but honest, to someone who is polished, but deceptive.

What is your chief characteristic?

I would say integrity, and also diligence.

What is your main fault?

I've been called "overly punctilious."

What is your favourite occupation?

Travel. As Mark Twain said, "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

What is your idea of happiness?

To continually learn. I am incurably curious about everything in this world, and I am most happy when I learn about a new activity, a new culture, a new book, a new recipe...

What is your idea of misery?

Being surrounded by arrogant, unkind people.

If not yourself, who would you be?

Until college I was quite artistic; everyone assumed I would do something related to the visual arts. In a different life, I could see myself working in digital animation and storytelling, something like what Pixar or Studio Ghibli do.

Where would you like to live?

I would love to live in Asia for a bit. But I must say that I'm pretty stoked (as we say) to be back in California. The weather's fantastic, there is world class surfing, skiing, and the great outdoors, and Los Angeles is one of the most interesting multicultural cities in the world.

Who is your favourite prose author?

It's hard to name a single favorite, but if I'm focusing on prose alone, I would say Hemingway, however clichéd the choice may be. His flinty, unadorned prose is so utterly meager and economical, yet so forceful and so evocative.

Who is your favourite hero/heroine in fiction?

Almost every American lawyer I know (and quite a few lawyers outside of the United States) will name Atticus Finch as a huge influence in his or her decision to become a lawyer.

Who is your hero in real life?

My parents, who sacrificed so much for me.

What historical person do you most dislike?

If current events count as "historical," I could certainly name one or two.

What is your favourite name?

I've always thought that the name Philomena is fantastic, both in the way it comes off the tongue, and in its meaning.

What do you hate the most?

The polarization of politics and the disappointing trend towards authoritarianism across the world.

What is your natural talent?

Can-do optimism.

What is your favourite arbitration-related decision?

I won't name a specific Award, but I respect any decision that is fully reasoned and does not shy away from and take shortcuts on difficult issues.

Who is your favourite arbitrator?

Again, I won't name a specific name, but I deeply appreciate any arbitrator who is well prepared and very pragmatic and detail-oriented in his or her approach.

Who is your mentor?

My mother, who taught me self-reliance and showed me what work ethic really is.

What is your motto?

Hang on tightly, let go lightly. To me, it means dogged tenacity in achieving one's goals and ambitions; at the same time, it means recognizing that not everything goes your way in life. When it does not, recognize this, move on, and don't dwell on the past. There's a very Taoist duality in that expression that I like.

