

# Confidences de Salon



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## Did you always dream of being involved in medical research/healthcare?

When I was a small child my younger sister became very ill with an appendix abscess and sepsis. I was taken to hospital to visit her daily. Initially I was very scared, but as she recovered it dawned on me that hospitals were useful and fascinating places – obviously a strange child!

## What is the best advice you had when you were starting your professional career?

Be flexible and resilient. This turned out to be useful advice as my career has taken a circuitous route via Anaesthetics and Intensive Care to Respiratory and Sleep Medicine. All sorts of opportunities have arisen serendipitously, and it helps to grasp them.

## What advice would you give someone at the beginning of their professional career?

Keep developing new interests and evolving. Doing the same thing is boring, and saps originality. Also get involved with the ERS and your national society; that way you get new perspectives and build networks, and lifelong friendships.

## What has been the greatest change to make a difference in your field in your lifetime?

For me it has been noninvasive ventilation and CPAP. Both have had a huge impact on survival and quality of life.

## How do you see the future of the ERS?

I see it expanding: increasing educational opportunities, supporting new generations of researchers, and as a key influential voice on respiratory health policy. It really is a force for the good. But then I would say that!

## What do you dislike most?

Currently Brexit and its ramifications.

## Who are your favourite authors?

My favourite book is *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann. I was fortunate to stay in the sanatorium it was based on (which is now a hotel) a few years ago. It was easy to imagine the mixed sense of ennui and fear. I recently enjoyed *The Book of Strange New Things* by Michel Faber and like most books by Jonathan Coe.



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ERS Vice President, Anita Simonds, gives an insight into her life <http://bit.ly/30uQjNN>

### **Where would you most like to live?**

I am happy living in London but would like to spend more time in the countryside. That rarely works out!

### **What is your personal motto?**

It's not really a motto, but the importance of kindness is undervalued in clinical practice. Technology only gets you so far.

### **What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses?**

I am hopeless at speaking foreign languages. One day I hope to make amends.