

Marilyn's VF Proust Questionnaire

1. What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Sitting in a garden with flowers that overlooks water, knitting and hanging out with family and friends.

2. What is your greatest fear?

Dying before I've finished doing what I want.

3. Which historical figure do you most identify with?

Elizabeth I.

4. Which living person do you most admire?

My mother.

5. What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

My intrinsic laziness.

6. What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Egocentricity.

7. What is your greatest extravagance?

Yarn, fiber, books and music.

8. What is your favorite journey?

Going up to Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire.

9. What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Godliness, especially the brand practiced by some so-called "Christians."

10. On what occasion do you lie?

I don't like lying but I will skirt the truth if I think I may hurt someone.

11. Which living person do you most despise?

George W. Bush

12. What do you dislike most about your appearance?

My dopey Campbell Kids cheeks.

13. Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

I'm an editor, so I try to avoid that. But probably "No shit!"

14. What is your greatest regret?

That my father never lived long enough to know his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

15. What or who is the greatest love of your life?

I have had two great loves in my life, something for which I will be forever thankful. One was my husband Jimmy. The other is a man who is the dearest, sweetest guy and I adore him—he knows who he is.

16. When and where were you happiest?

Up at Winnetoesaukee with Jimmy, my daughter and granddaughter and my mother, just lazing around the water and knitting with Ma.

17. Which talent would you most like to have?

I wish I could sing like Bonnie Raitt, and in fact, I can carry a tune on pitch but that's about it. I sing in the car. That's enough.

18. What is your current state of mind?

Possibly the best it's been since I became a widow. I'm happy with my work, I have my friends and family, and even though I've had some tough times, it's all worked out well.

19. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

I'd lose a gazillion pounds and I'm trying to do just that as I write this.

20. If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?

Absolutely nothing. I adore everyone in my family. They are remarkable people and I am glad they're mine.

21. What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Becoming a successful writer and editor without the benefit of a college degree.

22. If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

I'd like to come back as myself, actually.

23. What is your most treasured possession?

My knitting books.

24. What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

The loss of a loved one.

25. Where would you like to live?

In the country next to a lake surrounded by mountains.

26. What is your most marked characteristic?

My sense of humor.

27. What is the quality you most like in a man?

Honesty and integrity.

28. What is the quality you most like in a woman?

The same as I like in a man. Why should the two be different?

29. What do you most value in your friends?

Loyalty and honesty.

30. Who are your favorite writers?

Dorothy Parker, George Eliot, Jane Austen, P.D. James, Fay Weldon.

31. Who is your favorite hero of fiction?

Ignatius J. Reilly from *A Confederacy of Dunces*.

32. Who are your heroes in real life?

My father was certainly my hero. Grandma and Ma are my heroines. As far as celebrities or politicians are concerned, there ain't anyone I'd give that honor to.

33. What is it that you most dislike?

Dishonesty and bigotry.

34. How would you like to die?

In bed in my sleep, with no doctors, no tubes, no BS. Just at home. And preferably when I am past 95.

35. What is your motto?

"If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun." That's a Kate Hepburn quote and she's one woman that I wish I could have met.