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Q How did you become interested in neuroscience?

A I became interested in neuroscience in a wonderful high school with very poor resources in the isolated Chilean Patagonia. I grew up in the middle of forests and wildlife, and with exuberant nature that challenged me

to answer many questions on the behavior of small mammals, insects, and butterflies. I realized that brain research is the best way to understand the human phenomena, as well as communications in the animal world. When I was 25, I had the most gratifying experience of receiving neuroscience knowledge at Cold Spring Harbor directly from leaders such as Seymour Benzer, Eric Kandel, John Nichols, David Hubel, and Paul Greengard, among others.

Q What motivates you each day on your way to the lab?

A During my morning travels to the lab, or at any time during the day, I think about the planning of new experimental strategies to attempt to solve a scientific problem of my research. Many times I think about how to translate some of our discoveries into potential technologies that may contribute to modern medicine, especially how the science we are developing can contribute to the quality of life of people all over the world, including Alzheimer's patients.

Q If you hadn't become a neuroscientist what other career would you have pursued?

A I am very happy with my involvement in neuroscience. Since I was a child, I was also interested in medical areas, such as neurosurgery, and in philosophy. The force of neuroscience is shown by the progressive appearance of new lateral fields such as neuroeconomics, neuroethics, neurobotany, and neuroeducation.

Q What is your favorite food? Is it a good "brain snack"?

A I appreciate sea food, large shrimps, crabs, and a fresh salmon. I enjoy Thai and Vietnamese food. Certainly, both are excellent snacks for the brain and the spirit.

Q If you could have lunch with any person, alive or deceased, who would it be and why?

A Honestly, with my friend [Gunther S. Stent](#), who unfortunately passed away in 2008. We shared several fascinating discussions on different views on brain development, mind/body paradigms, and boundary conditions that appear when analyzing these phenomena based on a reduction to physical and chemical signals.

Q What might someone be surprised to know about you?

A Possibly, it would be a surprise for people when they realize how I extend my scientific views to grow as a person, every day attempting to be a better human being, and to serve mankind.

Q What is the best way to get young people interested in neuroscience?

A The best way to get the students and young fellows interested in the neurosciences is to teach them how to think great; to let them know that by striving toward excellence, discipline, hard work, and training a creative mind they can make sound contributions to neuroscience, and that neuroscience is connected to many other disciplines and works by multidisciplinary approaches.

Q As our first member from South America, what is something you want your fellow neuroscientists to know about the neuroscience community there?

A I would like to tell them that neuroscience is growing in Latin America, especially with talented young scientists. Latin America is exporting many creative young fellows trained in neuroscience to the highly developed world. Several Latin Americans, very successful in this field, are nowadays working in top universities in the US. I follow the careers of new doctors trained in our lab, and found that many of them achieved leadership roles in the US, UK, Italy, Sweden, and other countries.

Undoubtedly, Argentinean neuroscience has been of the highest impact, generating three Nobel laureates. Mexican neuroscience also has a long standing tradition. In Chile, with a few science leaders and innovators in the medical domains of neuroscience, we are at a very good time to trigger future development of the discipline. The lack of public policies and the fact that authorities have never protected the talents in this field has led to incredible levels of internal difficulties to pursue competitive science of high impact. Fortunately, world class scientists generate the capacity to grow on their own, with an enormous dose of effort and faith.