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Education and Experience: He received his doctorate in chemistry from the University of Palermo in 1998, following work carried out with David Avnir at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Arjan de Nooy at the TNO Food Research Institute in Zeist (the Netherlands). In late 2000, he joined the ranks of Italy's Research Council at the Institute of Chemistry and Technology of Natural Products founded by Professor Giulio Deganello.

Research Areas: Nanochemistry, Sustainability and Bioeconomy

Interview

Q1: What are the major current research activities in your group?

Research of our group encompasses a broad field, from nanochemistry applied to the development of functional materials for applications that range from protecting coatings to catalysis, to green chemistry applied to innovative processes for the bioeconomy. We also carry out extensive researches in solar energy, in energy policy and in hydrogen energy.

Q2: When did you get interested in the specific field? Could you please tell us more about your research in this respect?

I got interested in chemistry during the very last year of high school. During my subsequent studies, I realized the poverty of the old divisional subject approach to chemistry, with "departments" interested in inorganic, organic and physical chemistry. Atkins had just written the first physical chemistry textbook going beyond this artificial subjects division. Further developments in my research perhaps originate from this approach.

Q3: What is the most important personality in scientific research?

Courage. Even in today's science, you need to challenge the status quo. Take chemistry and chemical synthesis: It was thought to be a 'mature science' originating a huge industry with its well established processes, oil-derived feedstocks as raw materials, and centralized productions. Who would have imagined that both its processes and sources would soon be seen as obsolete and expected by dramatic changes whose early signs are now evident?

Q4: What is your motto?

Focus on one thing at a time. We have several big goals. But the healthy way to achieve them, we teach our students, is to do one thing at a time, prioritizing deep thinking and deep work.

Q5: Who is the person you admire the most?

A5: There are several, in vastly different fields. Some are alive, and some passed away, leaving us authentic treasures in terms of thoughts, practical solutions, insights, and so on.

Q6: What are your hobbies?

Windsurfing, learning and practicing the Feldenkreis method, reading.

Q7: What would you be if you were not a chemist?

I would research and teach history, especially economic history.

Q8: What are the most important things you learned from your parents?

Love God, and do whatever you please.

Q9: What is the best advice you have ever been given?

See above.

Q10: What is your most favorite book/music/movie/food/city?

City: Roma. Food: Strawberry grapes. Movie: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Books: They are too many.

My top articles

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