To whom would you most like to apologise?
My wife, son, and daughter. My absolute addiction to the antibiotic resistance issue took away time that I should have spent with them.

If you were given £1m what would you spend it on?
A Ferrari and a good apartment, and I would give the rest to my children. If you expect me to give it all away to charity… well, you will be disappointed. I am no Bill Gates!

Where are or were you happiest?
In the village where I grew up, in Kerala, India, with a riverside house and the greenery of rice fields stretching as far as the horizon. I used to hold the hand of my grandpa, who was blind since his early youth, and guide him along the narrow paths across the farm.

What single unheralded change has made the most difference in your field in your lifetime?
On the sad side, the demise of antibiotics—the wonder molecules of modern medicine turning less miraculous, having lost their battle against bugs. Antibiotic resistance threatens civilisation itself. But, on a positive note, the internet has revolutionised dissemination of knowledge in all areas of science, especially in medicine.

What book should every doctor read?
Love in the Time of Cholera, a novel by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, the Nobel Prize winning Colombian author.

What poem, song, or passage of prose would you like mourners at your funeral to hear?
No mourners, please. I would like my grave to be at the far end of the cemetery, with a nearby house where people can listen to the song Nadiya Kinaare, by the famous Hindustani musician Pandit Bhimsen Joshi. I want to hear this song every evening; it won’t matter whether my soul is in hell or heaven.

What is your guiltiest pleasure?
A post-lunch 10 minute power nap, in a chair in my office. There is a rumour going around that I snore, but I don’t believe it: jealousy has no cure or limits.

Clarkson or Clark? Would you rather watch Top Gear or Civilisation? What television programmes do you like?
Top Gear, of course; I love cars. I haven’t watched a single episode of Civilisation—may the almighty forgive my ignorance.

What is your most treasured possession?
Good memories of being with people who care about me.

What, if anything, are you doing to reduce your carbon footprint?
I never travel by private jet. I always use a commercial passenger plane.

What personal ambition do you still have?
I would like to invent something that can solve antibiotic resistance and to win the Longitude Prize, worth £10m. Unfortunately, my ambition will never materialise, as I’ve been tricked into joining the Longitude Prize Advisory Panel, making me ineligible to apply for the prize. I’ll have to continue my life as a poor doctor.

Summarise your personality in three words
Adventurous, emotional, and outspoken are the three words I would use to describe my personality.

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