

TO YOUNG PERFUMERS...

First and foremost, be truthful to yourself, your colleagues and your customers. To practice this profession, integrity is indispensable and ultimately will serve you very well.

Do not wait for inspiration. Work, and inspiration will find you.

Feed your creativity by having as many experiences as possible, without feeling that you must preserve all the ideas they spark. They will come back to you as you work on your creations.

Enjoy the process of each creation regardless of winning or losing a project. Think of the losses as part of your training.

As a young perfumer, I had one single goal: winning the project. Now, even though I hate to lose, I have become more philosophical, and what counts most for me is the satisfaction of creating. That is how I measure my success. And that turns out to be a wonderful way to keep winning.

Embrace innovation and change. One of my most rewarding projects was the study of fragrance diffusion on skin, done in collaboration with our scientists. Friendships with chemists like Dr. Braja Mookherjee have also deeply enriched my life and my knowledge of perfumery.

Engage with your community of perfumers. Doing so improves your understanding of the issues and deepens your sense of belonging. Years ago, a Perfumers Creative Council was formed. A select group of perfumers collaborated with management in an advisory role. I served as chair for seven years, which was a meaningful leadership experience.

Do not be afraid of AI. Use it to your advantage. Help design the systems that incorporate AI into your profession. This will provide you with access to information which will guide you, while preserving the freedom that is indispensable to the practice of your art.

Embrace collaboration. Respect your perfumer colleagues; trust them. What we do is art, supported by science and business, and it takes so many different skills to do it well that nobody can do it alone!

Lastly, take the time to stop and smell the flowers. Opening up to new sensations will broaden your palette and will enrich your creations with an infinite number of discoveries.

I wish each of you discipline and perseverance, beautiful collaborations with enriching partnerships, good luck and a great career.

Carlos Benaïm