



EXPLORING LIFE

Andrey Frolov, Sales Director of SIBUR's Plastics, Elastomers and Organic Synthesis Division, shares his thoughts on sports, love and balance in life.

On physical contact and life-long conclusions

I was six when I broke my nose in a street fight. This happened in Algeria where my father was working at that time. And it was then that I made one of the most important conclusions in my life – you have to be able to stand up for yourself. So I took up karate. In Algeria, it was the second most popular sport behind football, in which I also indulged often skinning my knees off.

FOR ME TEAM SPORTS ARE ALL ABOUT INTERACTION RATHER THAN AGGRESSION, WHILE INDIVIDUAL SPORTS ARE MORE LIKE A DIALOGUE WITH YOURSELF.

When I was ten, we returned to Russia, and I saw snow for the first time in my life. I was very enthusiastic about sports as a kid: I broke six pairs of skis within the third term of my fifth year at school. My father said then, "That's not yours, try some ball games." I spent a year doing volleyball, which I did not like because there was no physical contact. On top of that, back then volleyball was far less dynamic than it is now. This is why I decided to swap volleyball for basketball.

On sports and cult

Basketball is my specialist sport. From the very beginning, I trained with experienced players who were students at the university where my father worked. Those games made me stronger, more stress-resistant and more willing to be a winner. Later on, I trained with the national youth team, but I had to devote more time to my studies. Then I entered the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) and played for its teams.

By that time, basketball had begun to play a special role in my – and not only my – life. My father and mother played basketball, and so do I. And even though my children chose not to take up basketball professionally, they can still play it.



For me team sports are all about interaction rather than aggression, while individual sports are more like a dialogue with yourself – a search for the right motivation and the ability to convince yourself to move on.

On diversity, new interests and balanced approach

NOW I DO BASKETBALL, SKIING, FOOTBALL, SWIMMING, FITNESS, BIKING AND SURFING. EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE IF YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME EFFICIENTLY AND FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE.

I owe every new interest in sports to my children. I have two sons (one is seventeen and the other is sixteen) and a wife who is really keen on sports. Thanks to them, I had to take up first all summer and then winter sports. Now I do basketball, skiing, football, swimming, fitness, biking and surfing. Everything is possible if you manage your time efficiently and find the right balance between work and personal life. For example, we have been going to one of the surfing spots on the Atlantic coast for ten years now. My wife and sons train twice a day, while I do surfing at weekends when visiting them.

On health, competition and arts

Unfortunately, my parents did not insist that I do training in music and dancing even though I have a good ear for music and a sense of rhythm. Sports are about competition and health, while arts are all about beauty and spirituality. I was lucky to fill the gap, though. My younger son has an aptitude for painting. He has just finished his ninth grade in the Moscow Academic Art Lyceum of the Russian Academy of Arts. Unintentionally, he helped me develop a deeper understanding of the visual arts making it easier for me to appreciate the technique, quality and style of artwork.



I am impressed with paintings that present themselves differently from a distance and reveal intricate details, short strokes and touches when viewed closer. That is when you understand that the painter spent months working on this piece. Each time we visit London, my wife and I go to the National Gallery, choose one hall and spend several hours there after having done a preliminary research.

On literature and life cycles

My wife reads out loud for us on long car trips. The last book was memoirs of Konstantin Korovin.



Unfortunately, I read almost no fiction books at this point of my life (except for cases where I need it to help children with their school studies). I read a lot of specialist literature, analysts' reports and reviews instead. I also feel that I want and need to improve my knowledge of history because I often find myself thinking that global history is repeating itself.

EVERYONE IS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING IN THEIR LIFE. IF YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR COMPANION IS SEARCHING FOR, THERE IS A HIGH CHANCE YOU BOTH WILL SPEAK A COMMON LANGUAGE.

On cooking and avoiding the rush

In the 1990s, I entered MGIMO and moved to live on the campus. Those were hard times, and my parents would send me food with people coming from Ivanovo. The parcels they sent usually included potatoes, canned meat and all sorts of vegetable preserves. My grandmother, a doctor by profession, used to say, "Spend as much time on food as you need. Never hurry when you eat. And remember – you'd be better off cooking for yourself." And so I did. Cooking has turned into a hobby and, if I have time, I never miss a chance to indulge in it. For example, not long ago my co-workers and I gathered at my place to cook pilaf for the first time. It was very tasty. My elder son followed the suit – he has even taken a course in one of the many Moscow cooking schools.

On motorbikes and reloading

Motorbikes, garages and mopeds are a hobby from my childhood. But my ardour was damped first by my parents, then by my wife. Riding a bike is my way of relaxing and meditating as it gives me an opportunity to feel "reloaded" and see the city and life around me from a different perspective.

On animals and loyalty

We now have a dog and a cat. Dobermans are definitely my kind of breed in terms of vigour, temper and loyalty. They are self-reliant, efficient, easily trained and certainly rank among the most intelligent dogs.



My first contact with this breed was in the grandfather's family. The dog was kind at home and alert on the streets. Shortly after I graduated from the university, I bought a Doberman and understood that the dog needs to be trained. If you have established a personal contact with your dog, you need no leash to walk it.

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I think that the love and loyalty that your pet gives you does not compare to the ones you get from people. For example, no one is as happy over and over again when you get back home as your dog.

On love and achievements

Love is an unexplainable mixture of physiology, emotions, intellectual reactions and many more things that tie you to a particular person. In my case, it is love that keeps me moving forward. I am sure that my wife is the key driver behind most of my achievements. I totally agree with the saying that there is a great woman behind every successful man. I have been happily married for 20 years and feel uneasy when I go to bed during business trips without my loved one by my side.

On search and ability to listen

Everyone is looking for something in their life. If you understand what your companion is searching for, there is a high chance you both will speak a common language.

By the way, the key merit of speaking a common language is a clearer understanding of the interlocutor's thoughts and ideas. It is truly important to listen to others.

I was lucky enough to gain knowledge of several languages. I speak English and French and have basic command of Arabic. I also made several attempts at learning Spanish and Italian, but gave up for the moment.

I have recently developed a strong interest for psychology. For example, I take pleasure in learning more about socionics. It gives me particular pleasure to watch people during negotiations, as the great art of manipulation lays bare many hidden aspects of human nature.

On winners and explorers

I divide people into two categories. The first category includes winners, or people with the "I do" and "I achieve" mentality. The second category includes explorers, or people with the "I learn" and "I understand" mentality. In my opinion, transition from one category to the other is only possible at critical moments when, for example, a former professional athlete who was a champion quits sports and needs to face the reality and explore the world all over again. Those who do not understand it get lost in this rapidly evolving life.

I like to see myself as an explorer rather than a winner, because the triumph of victory and feeling of happiness are too transient.