

# BIOGRAPHY

Bertrand Piccard, born in Lausanne (Switzerland) on 1 March 1958, is pursuing three parallel careers, as doctor and psychiatrist; explorer with a passion for aviation; and public speaker. To deepen his understanding of the “inner world”, Bertrand Piccard studied medicine, completing a double specialization in psychiatry and psychotherapy, for both adults and children. His doctoral thesis entitled “ La Pédagogie de l’Epreuve ” (“Ordeal, a Learning Experience”), was awarded a prize by the Lausanne Faculty of Medicine. Attracted by the opportunity of administering therapy under hypnosis, he underwent training in Europe and the United States, and became a teacher and supervisor at the Swiss Medical Hypnosis Society.

Since childhood, he has been fascinated by how humans behave in extreme situations, and passionate about exploration. In the 1970s, he was one of the pioneers of hang gliding and ultralight flying, becoming European hang-glider aerobatics champion in 1985. An enthusiastic aviator, he then went on to obtain his licenses to fly balloons, airplanes, gliders and motor-gliders.

As a balloon pilot, he used his hypnosis skills during the first transatlantic balloon race, which he won in 1982 with Wim Verstraeten of Belgium. He then initiated the “ Breitling Orbiter ” project. In March 1999 he made the first non-stop round-the-world balloon flight, thus achieving, together with Englishman Brian Jones, the longest flight ever in the history of aviation, both for duration and distance.

Following his success, Bertrand Piccard was decorated with the Légion d’Honneur, the Olympic Order, the Wissam Al Alaoui, the Order of Saint-Charles and the highest distinctions of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the National Geographic Society and the Explorers Club. An honorary professor and an honorary doctor in science, letters and technology, he also received the Grand Prix of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

But his concerns also extend to the fight against poverty, which is why - with Brian Jones and Breitling - he launched Winds of Hope, the humanitarian foundation he now chairs. Teaming up with the World Health Organization (WHO), he committed Winds of Hope to fighting Noma through direct action in the field, by raising public awareness, and by bringing under one roof the organizations that fight this terrible disease. The United Nations appointed him a goodwill ambassador for its Population Fund (UNFPA).

By taking an approach to adventure centered on human values, Bertrand Piccard has become a speaker who is highly appreciated by the general public and big companies. Since 1992 he has been the main attraction at several hundred private and public events on all the continents. Taking his balloon flights as a metaphor for life, he examines motivation, the spirit of adventure, the psychology of communication and team-working, and how to deal with stress and the unpredictable.

Following the family tradition that combines scientific exploration with protection of the environment, Bertrand Piccard came up with the idea of flying round the world in a solar aircraft with no fuel or polluting emissions, so as to promote a spirit of pioneering in the field of renewable energies. He teamed up with André Borschberg to officially launch the Solar Impulse project in 2003 and started building a revolutionary aircraft.

A pioneer, an explorer and an innovator free from hidebound certitude and stereotypes, Bertrand Piccard is above all a visionary and communicator. As chairman of Solar Impulse, he developed the project's avant-garde philosophy and outlined its symbolic and political power, convincing financial partners to support the challenge. He shares control of the enterprise with André Borschberg, just as he takes turns with him at the controls of the solar aircraft.

Bertrand Piccard is married to Michèle and they have three children. He lives near Lausanne, where he still finds time to write descriptions for us of his impressions, his philosophy about adventure, and his ideas for the future.