

# Jean-Marie Cuillerot

**Born:** France

**Currently:** Dragonfly Therapeutics, Boston, Massachusetts



I grew up in France in a working-class city, with a chemical plant at its center. My grandparents were poor farmers, so I was not expected to succeed. I decided to study science and medicine. My first mentor explained to me, “when you cure someone with a runny nose, that doesn’t have any particular taste, but when you cure someone with cancer that has a very particular taste.” I chose to work on cancer because it’s tough. I am a big fan of Albert Camus and his book *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Success is not necessary, but continuing to work and make a difference is everything. I just wanted to be part of a crazy team working on curing cancer.

I love to be at the center of what is new and cutting edge, and that was happening in America. So, I tried to get a chance to work at the world’s leading cancer research center – in Texas. Imagine a French guy with only his high school English, landing in Houston with two bags: one with books; the other with

clothes. I spent 6 months at MD Anderson Cancer Center, working 7 days a week. I lost 16lbs in the first two months, but I loved it.

I moved to biotech because I wanted to help imagine new drugs to cure cancer for people all over the world. Drug development is a truly global enterprise. I’ve run studies with 1,000 patients with hundreds of collaborators all over the planet, all working for the same goal. It is the most diverse workplace imaginable. Science offers the joys of discovery to anyone with a curiosity and a willingness to work hard – the possibilities are limitless.

People should look at my picture and my profession and believe they can do anything. My grandparents were poor farmers in the middle of nowhere in France, and I was able to find my way in – so you shouldn’t be shy about dreaming, but you should also be prepared to work your ass off!