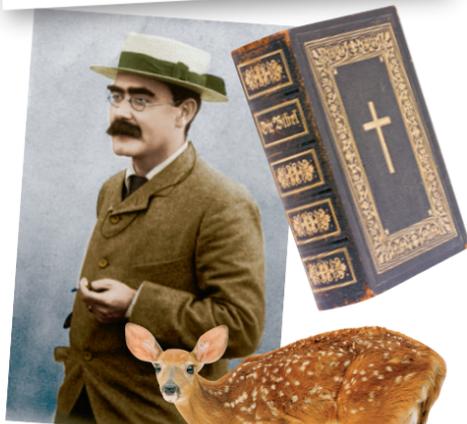



LONDON OLYMPICS SPECIAL


From top: Tokyo Disneyland, Chariots Of Fire with Ben Cross (left) as Harold Abrahams, The Bible, Rudyard Kipling, a deer, Midget Gems, Glee and an astronaut floating in space

The prized possession you value above all others... Apart from family, it's my health. I'm not into possessions. I even gave away my Olympic Gold medals for the decathlon [Moscow 1980 and LA 1984] to two friends who trained with me for seven years. They earned them.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... I've made loads of mistakes, but don't have regrets. You play things the way you see them and you can't go back and change anything.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd take my children [Rachel, 24, Austin, 21, Elliot, 19, Alex, ten, and Aaron, five] to all five Disneyland theme parks in the world. We'd start off in Japan, and end up in California. But I'm never happier than being in England, and one area that's special is Richmond Park. I love the deer and cycling around there, so maybe I can fit that in too.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Sweets of any shape and size. Midget Gems and red liquorice are big favourites.

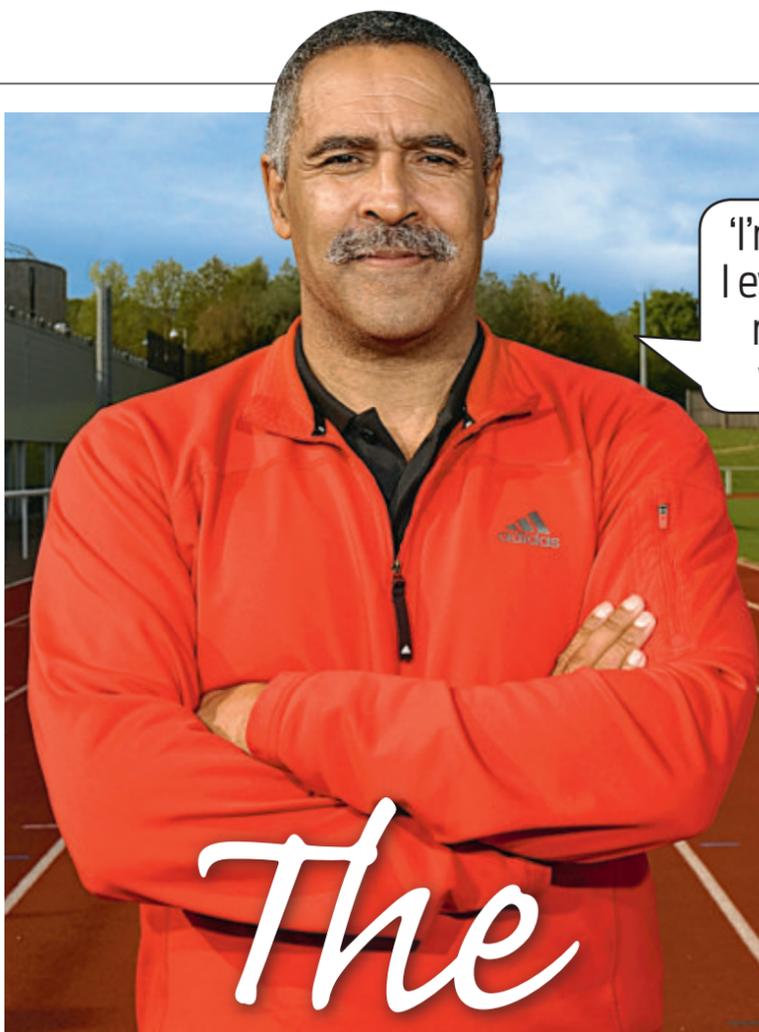
The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Bible. I went to Sunday school of my own accord from the age of seven because I was gripped by stories like the Sermon on the Mount and David and Goliath. I found them so believable.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... No idea! I try to keep out of the public eye generally and have only been doing publicity work recently because of the Olympics. Once the Games are over I'll go back to being invisible again!

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Insincerity. I prefer straight talking. If the answer is 'no', then say it. Don't say 'maybe' and not mean it.

The film you can watch time and time again... I love Chariots Of Fire [1981]. It's about people overcoming obstacles in life, and is in the same athletics language I speak. I knew Harold Abrahams [1924 Olympic 100m champion, played by Ben Cross in the film] and it was strange to see him depicted in the film. He was a grumpy git in real life!

The person who has influenced you most... Bob Mortimer, the sprint coach at the Essex Beagles athletics club. When I was 16 he forced me to change from the 100 metres to the decathlon. I was already a successful sprinter, but he was right and it changed my life.



'I'm not into possessions. I even gave away my Gold medals to two friends who trained with me'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: Olympic decathlete Daley Thompson

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...

Martin Luther King. People like him are very rare. It must be incredible to be driven by a higher purpose.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Live life to the full and be open to people and their ideas.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I'm nuts about the TV show Glee! I watched four episodes on the trot on a plane the other day.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...

My youth. I'm 54 now and can still do the 100 metres in 13 seconds. But I miss the freedom of youth, when you had no responsibilities and could just please yourself. However, I'm content in the fact I didn't waste my youth. I loved sports and training and that's what I did to the maximum.

The unending quest that drives you on... To make life as good as I possibly can for my family.

The poem that touches your soul... If by Rudyard Kipling. It's about fulfilling yourself and doing things to the best of your ability.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... I don't care what people think about me. If there is a misapprehension, then so what?

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Discovering sport changed my life, but not my character. When I was nine I thought I'd be the world's greatest footballer, then I found athletics and realised I was going to be great at something else. Even winning at the Olympics was not a big shock because I expected to win.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd get into my BMW and drive around the M25 as fast as I could.

The song that means most to you... Me And Mrs Jones by Billy Paul. It takes me back to when I was a teenager in Notting Hill going to discos. It was always the slow song at the end of the night and as soon as it came on you'd have to find a girl. Fun times.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Nothing can beat having kids. But every day is a great day for me.

The saddest time that shook your world... When I had to retire at 31 because I kept getting injured. I could have had another four years at the top.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I'd love to go into space and experience weightlessness.

The philosophy that underpins your life... You get out what you put in.

The order of service at your funeral... I can't begin to imagine being dead, so it wouldn't occur to me to talk about it.

The way you want to be remembered... Just as a good friend and a good dad. I don't even need the athletics to be remembered. That's all in the past.

The Plug... See Daley host the 'Dazathlon' at www.facebook.com/dazsoapclub and find his missing trophies to be in with a chance of winning a cash prize. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Mark Wahlberg's outrageous new comedy Ted hits cinemas on Wednesday. Monty Python's Spamalot returns to London at the Harold Pinter Theatre. And Contrast, the first album from Conor Maynard, the British Justin Bieber, is out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- All your favourite regulars return, including On Set Diary, The Wild Life with Monty Halls and Homework For Grown-Ups
- Jamie Oliver's favourite ways with shellfish
- PLUS Don't miss Britain's most detailed TV listings guide