The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s the turn of actor Peter Bowles

The prized possession you value above all others… A signet ring my wife Sue gave me after accepting my proposal – we’ve been happily married for 54 years. The biggest regret you wish you could amend… Not having lunch with Marlon Brando in London in 1984. I was invited but never got the message. Long afterwards I was told I was his favourite actor.

The temptation you wish you could resist… Smothering a bowl of lovely, healthy fresh fruit with Jersey cream!

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a gift… The biggest regret you wish you could amend… An unbroken night’s sleep. I discovered rock’n’roll on all-night radio in the US when I was 19, and it shattered my sleep pattern.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you… To finish my novel. The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions… I’d wake up alone in a small hotel in Dumfrieshire. I’d have tattie scones, black pudding and two fried eggs with a large mug of tea for breakfast, then go for a long walk in the Caringrongs. Sue and I have three children [Guy, 52, Adam, 50, and Sasha, 48] and six grandchildren [aged seven to 23], but we see them all the time. So, as this is a fantasy day, we’d simply go alone for lunch at the Beverley Hills Hotel. I’d have cold roe on toast. At some point I’d go to the gents and in the next cubicle would be a major film director, who would ask me to star in his next film. This happened to me once, but I declined. This time I would accept! In the afternoon I would go to the cinema and see the latest Quentin Tarantino film.

The way you wish you could erase… To keep acting. I’m nearly 79 and still busy. The way you want to be remembered… As a loving husband, father and grand-father. That’s all that matters.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance… The Story Of My Heart, Victoriana nature writer Richard Jefferies’ autobiography. It woke me up to the fact I was part of the bigger world.

The priority activity if you were the invisible Man for a day… I’d get to do judo. I got to do judo. I got to do judo. I got to do judo.

The best way to serve or eat... A signet ring my wife Sue gave me after accepting my proposal – we’ve been happily married for 54 years.

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The philosophy that underpins your life... To thine own self be true. It’s also important to be honest and to stand up for yourself.

The nature writer Richard Jefferies’ autobiography. It woke me up to the fact I was part of the bigger world.

As a loving husband, father and grand-father. That’s all that matters.

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Salma Hayek stars in rom-com Lessons In Love – in cinemas from Friday. A new solo album from Eagle Don Henley, Cass County, is out the same day. And Liza Minnelli plays the first of her two UK shows tomorrow night at the London Palladium