We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s the turn of TV chef Ainsley Harriott

The biggest regret you wish you could amend...
Not learning my mum Peppy’s recipes. She died in 1993 from pancreatic cancer when she was 65. She inspired me to cook, but she just threw in handfuls of this and that – and I wish I’d measured out her ingredients.

The temptation you wish you could resist...
Playing the online card game Spider Solitaire on the computer. I can easily lose two or three hours, which isn’t ideal if you have stuff to do.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance...
I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings. Maya Angelou’s extraordinary autobiography about overcoming racism in America. It helped me identify with my culture and ancestry.

The priority activity if you were the invisible man for a day...
I’d drive my own countries rich?

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...
I’ve always got Classic FM on. I know the story, the colours, the music – it makes me happy because it’s about family.

The poem that touches your soul...
I like the Tennessee Williams quote, ‘Kill my demons and my angels might die too.’ No one’s perfect – you’d lose something of yourself if you were.

The event that altered the course of your life and character...
Doing Radio 5 Live’s More Nosh, Less Dosh in 1993. I’d been spotted when I was head chef at Lord’s cricket ground. It led me to TV work, which changed everything.

The figure from history whom you’d most like to buy a pint and a... Muhammad Ali. As a black kid growing up I felt proud of what he stood for and achieved.

The art form you’d most like to learn...
Classical music. My dad Chester, who died in 2013, was a pianist who played classical music to switch off. It must have got into me as a child...

The one you’d most like to buy a pie and a...
From history the figure that drives you on. To make others feel happy and inspired.

The original song that means most to you...
The poem that touches your soul.

The song that means most to you...
I’ve Got Life by I Knew Why The Caged Bird Sings.

The regret you wish you could amend...
Not learning my mum’s recipes. She died in 1993 from pancreatic cancer when she was 65. She inspired me to cook, but she just threw in handfuls of this and that – and I wish I’d measured out her ingredients.

The regret you wish you could erase...
I’d drive my own countries rich?...

The way you wish to be remembered...
He brought love and happiness.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...
To get a ten from Len Goodman on Strictly!

The philosophy that underpins your life...
Share a smile with people.

The way you want to be remembered...
He brought love and happiness.

The WS... Jennifer Aniston stars in comedy The Office Christmas Party – in cinemas from Wednesday. Paul O’Grady and Amanda Holden open in the London Palladium’s panto Cinderella on Friday. And Neil Young’s new album Peace Trail is released the same day.

Next week...