

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's broadcaster Mariella Frostrup's turn

The prized possession you value above all others... My children's drawings. I intended to just save a few, but now Molly's 12 and Dan's 11 I have folders full of them. There's so much personality in every picture that it seems a crime to throw any away.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I'm not a regretful person, but I wish I'd gone to university. It's such a great opportunity to make friends and develop your knowledge.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Brown soda bread with half an inch of butter and a wedge of Cheddar. Must be my Irish childhood.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Owl And The Pussycat by Edward Lear. My parents read it to me and then I read it to my children. It feels as if that story is tethering my life across time.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... People being flaky or late, both of which suggest a disregard for other people's time.

Right: Peter Sellers in *The Return Of The Pink Panther*. Above right: Tupperware. Far right: Land's End, Cornwall

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I would eavesdrop on my children and find out all the secrets they keep from me.

The person who has influenced you most...

I couldn't choose between my parents, Peter and Joan. I had a tough childhood because they separated when I was eight and my father died from a heart attack when I was 15. But despite all that they laid solid foundations for my life, giving me courage and confidence.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Return Of The Pink Panther with Peter Sellers from 1975 is a classic. Laughter is so important in life and Sellers cracks me up.

The unending quest that drives you on... Having new experiences. The world is amazing and I have a billion things to try before I die.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Elizabeth I was truly extraordinary. I'd ask her what she thought of her dad.



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I collect Tupperware and get very angry when the lids are lost.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... I'm a strict mum but I'm not one for lecturing. I believe you learn your own lessons. My job is to set a good example.

The poem that touches your soul... Daddy by Sylvia Plath. She was eight when her father died and her poem echoes so much that I went through.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... The 'sexy blonde' label has stuck to me despite the fact that, at 54, I'm old enough to be a young grandmother.

The song that means most to you... Have I Told You Lately by Van Morrison. It makes me think of all the people I love and gives me a happy lump in my throat.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd take over all the diamond mines in Africa and use the money to fund the education of girls across that continent.



'The "sexy blonde" label has stuck to me despite the fact that, at 54, I'm old enough to be a grandmother'

The event that altered the course of your life and character... My father's death aged just 44 gave me a sense of my own mortality and an urgency to live life to the full. My immediate response was to leave home when I was 16 so I could get on with living.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Passing my driving test when I was 18 gave me a fantastic sense of independence. I went straight off driving around France for two weeks.

The saddest time that shook your world... The artist Angus Fairhurst was a good friend and I was heartbroken when he committed suicide in 2008.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. You have to believe in goodness.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm not religious but I would have a church service – just for a bit of insurance! I'd have Three Little Birds by Bob Marley because it evokes the simple beauty of life, then everyone would sing Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen. To close, I'd want the entire congregation to do a Zumba fitness dance to Hot Hot Hot by Buster Poindexter.

The way you want to be remembered... As a tall, slim genius. But sadly, that's never going to happen!

The Plug... Mariella's series *Bringing Up Britain* returns to BBC Radio 4 on Monday at 9am. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My father's pocket-sized book of 1,000 random words. I lost it four years ago when we moved from London to Somerset. Along with his small wooden chess set, it was the only thing of his that I had.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To pass my motorbike test. I'll do it when I'm 60 and the kids are long gone.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up with my husband Jason and the children at our riverside house in Somerset. After breakfast I'd go scuba diving at Kimbe Bay in Papua New Guinea, then fly to New York for shopping and lunch with girlfriends at a brasserie called Le Bilboquet. Back to England for a walk with friends on the Cornish coastal path, then dinner with my brother at The Winding Stair in Dublin. I'd end the day in the Norwegian mountains soaking in a traditional Scandinavian wooden hot tub under the stars with Jason.



PS...

Sienna Miller opens in *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* at London's Apollo Theatre on Thursday. Andy Serkis stars in *War For The Planet Of The Apes*, in cinemas Friday. And *Wet Wet Wet* begin their 30th anniversary tour in Rochester on Wednesday



NEXT WEEK

- The majesty of Alaska's wilderness, live on BBC1
- Serve up our fabulous summer salads
- Monty Don on how to grow exotic tree ferns
- PLUS Britain's best TV guide