

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of newsreader Natasha Kaplinsky

The prized possession you value above all others...

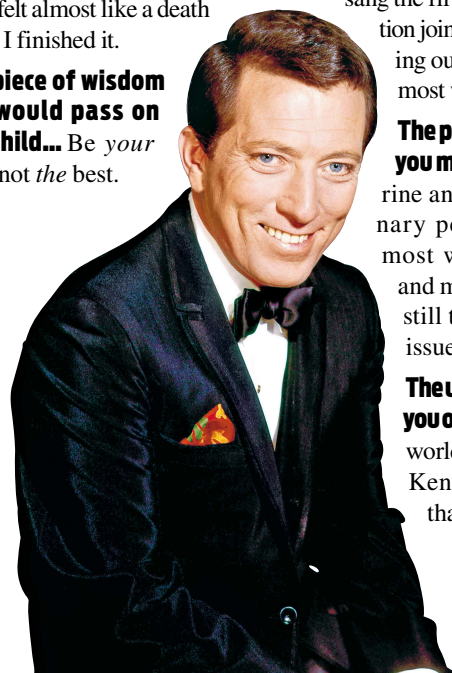
A silver necklace my husband Justin had made for me. It has two round discs – one with my fingerprint on one side and our daughter Angelica's, who's now eight, on the other. The second disc has Justin's and our son Arlo's (now nine) fingerprints.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Giving up piano when I was 12 because I thought I was too busy.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Fudge. I'm 45, yet I still cannot control my sweet tooth.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Collector by John Fowles, which I devoured when I was 14. It felt almost like a death when I finished it.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Be *your* best, not *the* best.



The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...

Dog mess. It was one of the reasons we moved out of London to Sussex five years ago. The city is full of it. We have five dogs. Part of owning a dog is cleaning up after it.

The film you can watch time and time again...

Life Of Pi touched me immensely. It's so beautiful and tells you about faith and spirituality. I wept constantly.

The song that means most to you... Can't Take My Eyes Off You by Andy Williams. Right after our wedding ceremony in 2005, Justin sang the first verse, then the congregation joined in with a jazz band playing outside the church. It was the most wonderful surprise.

The person who has influenced you most... My parents, Catherine and Raphael, are extraordinary people who instilled the most wonderful values in me and my younger brother, Ben. I still turn to them if I have any issues that I need to discuss.

The unending quest that drives you on... To create a more equal world. I grew up near Nairobi, Kenya, and saw deprivation that still haunts me.

Left: Andy Williams.
Above: hot chocolate.
Right: pygmy goats



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

Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of Save The Children. I've been an ambassador for nearly ten years. I'd thank her for the sacrifices she made to create it.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Dancing with a top professional dancer. There's nothing like being guided across a dance floor as I was on Strictly with Brendan Cole in 2004. Dancing at a disco with a drunk husband is very different!

The poem that touches your soul... Desiderata by Max Ehrmann is a blueprint for life.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I have straight hair! I have natural ringlets that are impossible to control without endless blow-drying. It's perfect for Justin, he gets to sleep with two women – one who goes to bed with straight hair, and one who wakes up curly!

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd always go first class on the train to get a seat.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... When I was six, my mum told me to give some of my toys to children at an African village. I reluctantly took a doll, but when I gave it to a girl, all the other kids mobbed her and tore it apart. I was in such shock. I felt so guilty, it gave me a desperate desire to make things better.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Collecting animals! I have 47 on our farm, including two pygmy goats, three sheep, nine alpacas and a cow called Mabel. My husband is an investment banker and travels a lot: whenever he's away I gain a new animal!

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd watch the sunrise from the beach on Soneva Fushi in the Maldives. I'd then ski at Les Gets, France. I'm not very good, so I'll do easy red runs – I call them pink – then have a hot chocolate. We'd go to Cape Town for lunch with my parents and extended family in Africa. The evening would be spent at home, reading to

'I miss dancing with Brendan Cole. Dancing with my drunk husband at a disco is very different!'

the kids. To have Justin home on a school night is special. I'm a hopeless cook, so we'd just have soup and relax.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Becoming a mother is the most powerful and incredible thing. I had a lot of miscarriages, so I panicked that it would never happen.

The saddest time that shook your world... Fracturing my back when I was 19 during a boat trip in Italy. We hit a wave and I was thrown backwards. It was terrifying not knowing if I'd walk again. It took ten years to recover fully.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd secretly help out loved ones, or in the A&E units at hospitals.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I gave up art after A-levels, but I hope to take it up again.

The philosophy that underpins your life... The motto in our family is: the kindest is the winner.

The order of service at your funeral... A simple service and choral music in the village church where my children and I were baptised. I want my family to be at peace about my death.

The way you want to be remembered... Hopefully, as the best possible daughter, mother, wife, friend and colleague.

The Plug... Natasha is the co-founder of Mum & You, a mother and baby brand with products designed by mums for mums. Visit mumandyou.com. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Saoirse Ronan stars in the adaptation of Ian McEwan's bestseller

On Chesil Beach, in cinemas Friday. Previews of Consent with

Lee Ingleby begin the same day at London's Harold Pinter

Theatre. And Foreigner's UK tour starts in Manchester today



NEXT WEEK

- Prince Harry's favourite childhood recipes
- The magic of mint, with Monty Don
- PLUS Britain's best and most comprehensive TV guide tells you all you need to know to sit back and watch the Royal Wedding