



From top: A sunset safari in Botswana, Sir David Attenborough, Ben's mother – the actress Julia Foster, crisps, New York shops and James Cracknell

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My 12-year-old black Labrador, Inca. I got her as a puppy during my year on Taransay [the island used for the BBC series *Castaway* in 2000] and I love her more than I can describe. She has been my most loyal friend and helped me find a wife – I met Marina while we were walking our dogs.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** Who am I and what am I here for? But maybe I'm going a little deep!

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

A swim and breakfast on the Amalfi coast in Italy with Marina and our son Ludo, 20 months, and daughter Iona, 11 weeks, then a walk in the Bolivian Andes. Lunch on an island in French Polynesia, followed by shopping in New York. Tea in Cartagena, Colombia, then dinner under the stars in the Okavango Delta of Botswana and a night safari. Home to my bed in west London.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Crisps. My weakness verges on addiction. I'll eat any flavour.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The *Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver from 1998 is a tale about missionaries in the Congo. It's a dark parable of one man's blinkered passion and it took my breath away.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd love to know what my son Ludo does and how his mind works when we're not looking.

**The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse...** It's given me so many opportunities, but seeing yourself on TV can make you vain. I've begun to notice the sun lines on my face and I've become more body-conscious.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** *Dumb And Dumber* is my feelgood film. I watched it obsessively at university and its basic humour always gives me a warm glow.

**The person who has influenced you most...** Apart from my parents and my family, it is Sir David Attenborough. As a child, I was enthralled by his programmes – and I still am.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Fidel Castro. I'd ask if he really thinks his revolution has worked.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Be comfortable in your own skin. I was extremely shy and lacked confidence as a boy. Everyone else



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# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: presenter and adventurer Ben Fogle*

seemed so much better than me, but becoming more confident changed my life. I only wish it had come sooner.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Interior design. I'm addicted to interiors magazines and I designed the inside of our house. Marina says I'm a control freak, but I think it's a reaction to spending so much time overseas. The house is my nest and I want it just so.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My anonymity;

losing it has given me so much, but it has come at a cost.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** I wish I'd been with my friend James Cracknell when he had the cycling accident that nearly killed him in America last year. Maybe I could have helped him avoid it.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Risk by Anonymous. It's about the importance of taking risks in life. It underpins everything I believe in. I

scrawled it on a wall in the kitchen and I read it if I'm ever in doubt. It ends, 'Only a person who risks is free.'

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm posh. Admittedly I had a privileged childhood, but my father is a Canadian vet and my mother an actress. I am driven to shake off the tag.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Appearing in *Castaway*. It was the best year of my life and it changed me for ever.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd squat in a house overlooking the Atlantic in Devon or Cornwall and then live happily ever after.

**The song that means most to you...** It is currently Cee Lo Green's *Bright Lights Bigger City*. It reminds me of Marina, Ludo and me dancing in the kitchen and it fills me with joy.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** The day in 2006 when James Cracknell and I arrived in Antigua having rowed 3,000 miles across the Atlantic in 49 days, 19 hours and 8 minutes. It was a moment of undiluted happiness.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The loss of loved ones. Each one turns your world upside down.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** I'd like to act. I applied to drama schools but was rejected by them all. My dream is to perform with my mother, the actress Julia Foster.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Add life to your days, not days to your life is one of my driving forces.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'd want an extract from Captain Scott's diary, 'What lots and lots I could tell you of this journey. How much better has it been than lounging in too great comfort at home.' Then maybe everyone would dance to Cee Lo Green.

**The way you want to be remembered...** For making a difference.

**The Plug...** Ben Fogle's memoir, *The Accidental Adventurer*, is out on 1 September (Bantam Press, £18.99). ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

PS...

*Daniel Craig stars in new sci-fi western *Cowboys And Aliens*, in cinemas now. *South Pacific*, a sensation on Broadway, opens at London's Barbican Theatre. And nostalgia fans should head to the star-studded 80s *Rewind* festival near Henley next weekend*



**NEXT WEEK**

● The X Factor is back – and we've got all the gossip on the new judges ● Delicious dishes inspired by the deli counter ● Meet the second two finalists in our National Garden Competition ● PLUS Don't miss Britain's biggest and most detailed TV listings