We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s former cricketer David Gower

The prized possession you value above all others... A David Shepherd oil painting called Rhino In The Kaoko-veld. I bought it about 20 years ago for £20,000. It marries my two loves – David’s work and wildlife, which stems from my childhood in East Africa.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Selling Mum’s house and contents too quickly after she died in 1986 of heart failure. She was in her mid-60s and I was so sad I just cleared the decks. I wish I’d kept a few things.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I’d have breakfast in the crater at the Ngorongoro conservation area in Tanzania with my wife Thorunn and our daughters Alex, 19, and Sammi, 17. We’d go on safari then switch to the Maldives for scuba diving. After that, we’d wander around the market in St Tropez, then arrive at my cousin Richard’s 18th birthday party in England. We’d end the day in a suite at the Taj Lake Palace hotel in Udaipur, India.

The way to change the world... The anti-apartheid activist who died after interrogation by South African police in 1977. It has such deep feeling and was so important politically.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Lifting the Ashes in ’85. It was when my dreams came true.

The saddest time that shook your world... My father Richard’s death was when I was 16. He had motor neurone disease and cancer. He’d been a superb all-round sportsman – to see him reduced to a shell was awful.

The poem that touches your soul... Casabazonka by Spike Milligan, which goes: ‘The boy stood on the burning deck, Whence all but he had fled – The twit!’ It’s so Spike and never ceases to amuse me.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To achieve Zen-like serenity. Life has ups and downs, but I’m learning to let things go.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I’m always laid back. It was a self-defence mechanism I developed in my playing days as a way of calming nerves. But, like anyone, I have a temper.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Always look on the bright side. www.laithwaites.co.uk.

The way you want to be remembered... As told to Rob McGibbon.

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The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Smile – because it enhances people! My kids introduced me to this phrase recently and I love it.

The song that means most to you... Peter Gabriel’s Biko [about Steve Biko, the anti-apartheid activist who died after interrogation by South African police in 1977]. It has such deep feeling and was so important politically.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To ride a horse at full speed on a beach without falling off. The philosophy that underpins your life... Always look on the bright side. www.laithwaites.co.uk.

The order of service at your funeral... I’ll have a service in our local church in Hampshire with some great hymns, like I Was Born To Do My Own Thing. Then everyone can go to the pub.

The way you want to be remembered... Fondly.

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