Richard Branson: The Definite Article

We Ask A Celebrity A Set Of Devilishly Probing Questions – And Only Accept

The Definitive Answer. Now It’s The Turn Of Richard Branson

Rob McGibbon / Daily Mail Weekend Magazine / The Interview People

Photography by Varuna Liyanage

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again… You mean, apart from losing my virginity?! I am unbelievably lucky I’ve still got both my parents, my beautiful wife of 30 years and two fantastic kids. At the ripe old age of 60, I still have all my treasured items.

The unending quest that drives you on… To keep learning.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no time travel restrictions…

For the first 12 hours I would travel back to the age of the great explorers and hitch a ride with Sir Walter Raleigh. For the remaining 12 hours I would travel into the future and have a nose around the Apple offices and pinch a few ideas!

The temptation you wish you could resist… I've never been very good at resisting temptation.

The Way You Want To Be Remembered… As Someone Who Tried (And Hopefully Succeeded) To Make A Positive Difference To The World

The book that holds an everlasting resonance… Tim Flannery's The Weather Makers.

This groundbreaking book explains the implications of global climate change and what we can do to avoid a catastrophe that will affect the survival of all life on Earth. Our fate is in our hands. Read it!

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day… Think I'll keep this answer to myself.

The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse… I genuinely don't think it's changed me at all. I'm an entrepreneur and have become well known because I have needed to make my businesses well known, without the ad-spend of my competitors.

It was necessity, rather than a desire to be famous, that put me in front of cameras.

The film you can watch time and time again… The Hangover. I watch a lot of films on aeroplane seatback screens. Sometimes it's just good to kick back and laugh out loud at something silly – but I'm not sure it goes down too well with my fellow passengers.

The person who has influenced you most… I would have to have two: my wonderful parents. They have been hugely influential and supportive and a constant

sounding board in my life.

The person from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint… Gandhi – obviously, it would have to be a vegetarian pie and a non-alcoholic pint! With everything going on in the world today it would be fascinating to hear his views on peaceful mass protests and to ask him how he would have used Twitter, if he'd had it, to help his cause.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child… For every wonderful thing you receive in life, give something back.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity… I love doing magic tricks. I drive my friends and family mad with them. My favourite is the disappearing wrist watch – I've raised a few pounds for charity doing it.

The prized possession you value above all others, excluding people… My own piece of paradise, Necker Island. I am so fortunate to call this beautiful jewel in the Caribbean my home.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend… Life always holds regrets. I'm sure most people wish we had said sorry more, when it's really mattered, to the person or people we've hurt, whether that hurt be big or small.

The poem that touches your soul… There once was a young woman from Nantucket…

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase… That I'm 60 years old – everyone who knows me knows that I'm still really a teenager!

The event that altered the course of your life and character… In the summer of 2006 I met with Al Gore and we talked about the effects of climate change and how humans are destroying the planet. This had a profound effect on my outlook towards how we leave our planet for our children.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it… Like I would tell you! OK then, I'd steal British Airways' slots at Heathrow.

The song that means most to you… Well, it's an album – Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells. The rest is history.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever… Simple: becoming a father. Now I just need Holly or Sam to get a move on and make me a grandfather.

The saddest time that shook your world… The loss of my dear friend Steve Fossett.

We had a wonderful bond and shared many great adventures.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you… It’s got to be space travel at affordable prices, but I’m on the case at Virgin Galactic. It’ll take a decade or two to bring prices down to a level that the majority of people will be able to afford but I believe this will be possible in our lifetime.

The philosophy that underpins your life… We owe it to future generations to leave the world in a better state than how we found it.

The order of service at your funeral… The bar is open!

The way you want to be remembered… As someone who tried (and hopefully succeeded) to make a positive difference to the world.