



An appointment with  
**THOMAS LUNDGREN**  
*Anya Lee catches up with the legendary circus master behind THE One.*

**Growing up, I wanted to be...** an ice-hockey player or a rock star, but mostly I wanted to be financially independent.

**I left school at...** the age of 22, but my real education started after this.

**My first job was...** at a lumberyard. According to my mom, I came home from work on the very first day and told her that I would never be a worker, because I hate reheated leftovers!

**My happiest memory is...** very hard to remember, as I have a very small brain – like Winnie the Pooh!

**If someone wanted to follow my career path, I would advise them to...** do what they want to do and not what their parents want them to do.

**The most rewarding part of my job is...** doing real good in the world as a by-product of our success in selling the stuff we love. Apart from ethical sourcing, some of the ways in which we make a difference is through hiring challenged employees; through local volunteering initiatives where each of our stores supports their chosen cause(s); and through our big idea, THE Onederworld – our Sustainable Village Community programme. We kicked off our first Onederworld project, the Pimbiniet Community in Kenya, in August 2008 in conjunction with Free The Children and have just completed the first classroom at a school we are building with the help of the villagers. It's deeply rewarding!

**Having professional goals is important because...** it makes you stop and question the word 'professional' on a daily basis.

**Name:** Thomas Lundgren

**Age:** 48

**Born:** Sweden

**Lives:** Dubai

**Marital status:** Married to Ewa forever!

**Profession:** Inventor and CEO (Chief Emotional Officer) of THE One

**The best part of having a large team is...** the thrill of taking a whole bunch of people on a journey to a place they would never have gone without me.

**I feel fortunate because...** I have a lot of friends. The older you get, the more you realise what real friends are.

**Even when you are at the top of your game, never forget...** it's the customer who pays your salary.

**The recent economic crisis has taught me...** that people have very short memories and in the end, everyone just looks after themselves.

**Creating a warm home environment is essential because...** otherwise you would freeze! A real home has nothing to do with the furniture or the architecture. A real home is something you feel when you walk into it. It doesn't matter if it's a mud hut in Africa or a mansion in LA, it's all about the people who live in it.

**I stay positive by...** continuously reminding myself that I have nothing to complain about.

**Every morning I smile because...** I am my own

boss, I have a fantastic family and I'm healthy.

**My parents always told me to...** be honest.

**My motto is...** Does the world really need another retailer?

**I'm most proud of...** my three daughters: Izabel, 20, Danielle, 16, and Renée, 14.

**I can't live without...** air, food and water, but I would be very depressed without my iPod.

**My biggest indulgence is...** doing absolutely nothing whenever I get a chance.

**Three items I can't live without...** My iPod, Apple Mac and BlackBerry.

**My favourite celebrity is...** Oprah Winfrey, because she's made it on her own from nothing and she makes people happy.

**I knew I had made it when...** I'll let you know when Oprah calls me to be on her show!

**I am helping save the environment by...** discontinuing all paper and plastic shopping bags in our stores and replacing them with biodegradable plastic and earth-friendly fabric bags. Getting rid of all plastic packaging material and reusing all our old boxes.

**Before I die I want to go back to...** Africa.

**I stay healthy by...** trying to eat organic and healthy food (more green than brown) and trying to go to the gym. But as my personal trainer says: "I'm not your personal trainer, because I never see you."

**The last text message I received was from...** my mom asking me to buy milk.

**November is the month to...** get outside because the weather is fantastic! 🌞