

## Broken - brilliant

Wednesday, 21 June 2017

I've been wondering about the attractive woman and Sean Bean's dilemma - should he break or bend the rules of confession?

A heart breaking episode; no spoiler alert for those watching on iPlayer.

But apart from Jimmy McGovern's usual talent for getting to the heart of problems, his gripping show highlighted an aspect of society that has puzzled me for ages. Why do people care about the opinions of strangers? The lady in this episode was destroyed by the knowledge that her friends, family, neighbours would find out she'd been stealing and that she could not live with - despite having three children, a mother and a dog who would all be devastated by her suicide.

How she coped or not - and Sean Bean's dilemma - I'll leave you to find for yourself (I hope you're watching; it is brilliant TV).

But I have friends whose existence depends on Twitter or Facebook or Tumblr or Instagram. Children kill themselves because they are bullied. Why? Why do they care? It has never bothered me - possibly one reason why I found prison life perfectly acceptable.

Who cares if trolls hate you? They hate everyone (though not as much as they hate themselves) - it's their problem, not yours. But this lady found the opinion of others so important she was going to kill herself.

I never fell for the image of JK - heart throb pop star? Bollocks. Successful entrepreneur? Rubbish. Great ears - true.

If you know yourself, others getting it right or wrong makes little difference to your lives. Those who love me, love the real me. Those who hate me can feel free to do so; it makes no difference to me. Why would it?

Why is the opinion of strangers, frequently wrong, often based on media image, so important to people?

I suspect it reflects the fact that many don't know themselves and construct a fake persona they don't want rumbled. What an odd way to live. Can they ever find real happiness or get into real relationships if they are fakes even to themselves?

If I'd been Sean Bean's character I'd have persuaded the lady that those who matter in her life (including her dog) would love her no matter what; such trivial life changes as going to prison are minor hiccups in life.

Enjoying yourself wherever you are, sharing love with family and friends, making others happy, appreciating the best in life - you have those forever until you die and they don't depend on locked doors.

And the priest should have made her know - the effect on others of her suicide would be far, far worse than nicking a few quid to waste on silly fruit machines.