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# The Push (12)

A Derren Brown TV special

Watch the whole episode together or concentrate on this extended clip clips: 20:30 to 38:30.

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## Synopsis

In this Derren Brown special, a normal person, ‘Chris’, is selected to take part in an elaborate social experiment. Over the course of an evening, Chris is put in increasingly stressful situations to see if he will comply with those around him. All of this culminates with Chris being told to push someone off a building, seemingly to their death. Will Chris do what he is told, or will he resist the pressure to conform?

Derren Brown has built a career of illusions, psychological experiments and achieving the seemingly impossible. He is a popular figure, although his relationship with Christianity is a little rockier, with Derren targeting the prosperity gospel movement in America and seemingly performing miracles and healings on stage to ‘prove’ their falsehood. Irrespective of this, Derren has carried out some quite amazing specials over the years, from surviving Russian roulette to predicting the lottery results to staging an apocalypse in order to help someone become a hero. *The Push* is Derren’s most audacious special yet – a social experiment to see if he could manipulate someone to commit murder over the course of an evening.

## The episode

This session is aimed at a group of twelve plus; with that in mind, chat through the following questions to help settle them into the discussion format:

* Have they seen any Derren Brown episodes before? Are they aware of any of his previous stunts? (You may want to give some context here to explain.)

*The Push* is a social experiment carried out by Derren Brown which asks the question of whether we can be pushed to our limits socially, even to the point of murder. The clip we are focusing on is where everything starts to go wrong for Chris. Unbeknown to him, he is the subject of a social experiment where everyone around him is an actor. Bernie, the auctioneer for a charity event that Chris has helped coordinate, has seemingly died and in a moment of panic, Chris is encouraged to hide the body and later impersonate Bernie in front of a crowd of rich benefactors. Chris is a normal person who is being pushed to his limits, who when put in a pressured situation, starts to act in a way that would shock many. *The Push* asks the question: are we really good people, or are we easily manipulated to carry out immoral actions?

* Are most people ‘good’? How do we define ‘good’?
* Why do you think that Chris does as he is told?
* Do you think you would act in a similar way if faced with this social pressure?
* Is this sort of social experiment unethical?

## The Bible

Building on the clip from today, read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. This verse focuses on social pressure and follows on nicely from the chosen clip. Afterwards, chat through the following questions:

* What is the overall message of this passage?
* What does it mean that we won’t be tempted beyond what we can bear? How does this apply to our lives?
* What should we do when we are tempted to give in to social pressure to do something we know to be wrong?
* How can we build a community that supports one another against social pressure?

*The Push* is available to stream on Netflix.

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