

Ant under fire as he begs for forgiveness

Should we forgive Ant
McPartlin? The presenter has
pleaded guilty to drink driving.
In an emotional statement, he
apologised and promised to
change his ways. But not
everyone is sympathetic.



Guilty pleasure: Yesterday's papers splashed McPartlin's sentencing across their front pages.

On Monday, Ant McPartlin — one half of the presenting duo Ant and Dec — pleaded guilty to drink driving. He had crashed into two cars on March 18, although nobody was badly hurt. His punishment was a £86,000 fine and a 20-month driving ban.

Through his lawyer, McPartlin, who has struggled with alcoholism, said that he hoped he could be "forgiven". But the headlines offered little sympathy: "Shamefaced"; "Guilt"; "A picture of self pity."

Forgiveness is an important concept in ethics. The ability to stop feeling negatively toward someone over an offence can help everyone involved to move on, and is often seen as proof of moral strength. It is taught by

most religions.

These factors can inspire people to forgive the most awful crimes. This week the father of Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager killed by a racist gang in 1993, said that his faith has enabled him to forgive the murderers.

People can feel betrayed when a public figure behaves improperly, even if they have not been wronged directly. Whether they forgive the person depends on many things: their offence, their reputation, how much regret they show, and perhaps luck.

Thus sex scandals end some political careers but not others. Some celebrities remain popular after committing serious crimes; others are shunned.

Should we forgive McPartlin?

He's a celebrity...

Yes, say some. McPartlin is just a troubled guy who made a mistake. He has repented and promised to deal with his issues. If we don't forgive him, we will make it harder for him to turn his life around — and it will weigh on us

Hang on, reply others. McPartlin committed a serious crime, and almost killed people. If he was an ordinary guy, we would not let him off the hook. As a celebrity, he is a role model, and his behaviour is even more unforgivable.

4 Q & A

Q: What do we know?

A: Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly met in 1989, as child actors on the set of the show

Byker Grove. After a career in pop music, they began presenting TV shows (as Ant and Dec) in 1994.

Q: What do we not know?

A: What's next for Ant and Dec. McPartlin has

stopped working while he seeks treatment for his alcoholism. The pair are very popular, but this crisis could tarnish their image.



Should celebrities and ordinary people be held to different ethical standards?



Think of a time when somebody wronged you. Have you forgiven them? Why (not)? Write down your thoughts in a letter to that person.



"To err is human; to forgive, divine." Alexander Pope

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



£86,000 - This is thought to be the highest fine ever handed out for drink driving in the UK.

Ethics - A set of moral principles which lead

people to act for the greater good.

Religions – For instance, the Bible teaches that those who forgive others for their sins will in turn be forgiven by God.

Stephen Lawrence - Lawrence was stabbed to

death in an unprovoked attack in South London. The investigation was badly flawed; an official report labelled the police "institutionally racist". Five killers were suspected, but only two have been convicted.



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