

Rachel's Story

This story is not to be reproduced without the express permission of Why me?

Just a few months after Rachel's house was burgled, she was invited into prison to tell the burglar face to face just how much hurt and harm he'd caused her and her family.

Rachel and her husband Chris got home early one evening in December to find they'd been broken into. The back door had been smashed and they soon found there were several items missing upstairs including some of the contents of Rachel's jewellery box.



"It was really upsetting. The children were frightened the burglar might come back and we spent Christmas waiting for the door to be fixed.

The offender is caught

"Not long after it happened, the police informed us they'd caught the perpetrator and we got one of the items of jewellery back. I was very glad about that since it has great sentimental value. But we still couldn't forget about what had happened since our youngest child had become very frightened at nights and needed a lot of reassurance.

An unexpected invitation

"A short while after the burglar had been sentenced we got a phone call from the Restorative Justice team at Sussex Police asking if we'd like to meet him.

"We had a preparation session a week or so before the meeting where we were told what to expect and asked what it was we wanted to say to the burglar.

The prison visit

"I was feeling quite emotional when we got into the room in the prison where the meeting was going to take place.

"When it was my turn to talk I told him how his actions had caused our family such distress. It's horrible knowing someone's been in your home. I think I connected to him when I talked about the piece of jewellery he'd taken. He said he was sorry for everything he'd done and the harm he'd caused and I felt very sad for him.



Confidence restored

“I was so glad we met him. It’s taken away all the mystery and given us back our confidence. It has been great to be able to tell our youngest child – the one who was so frightened – that we saw him in prison, that he said sorry and that he cried. It’s stopped her having that terrible image of a scary figure lurking out there.

“Chris and I really thought that we’d got a lot out of it all. We also hope we’ve helped him to turn his back on offending once he’s released. I actually care about what happens to him and we’ve asked the police to keep us in touch.”