




**Transparency vs. Secrecy:
Do We Reveal or Conceal?**
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Secrets

Most people have about a dozen things about themselves they have never shared with anyone, according to a study quoted in Psychology Today.




Why Some Secrets are Harmful?

Some secrets are harmful because they evoke shame.

Shame Silences!

There is a motto in recovery jargon that cautions, *"we are only as sick as our secrets"*.



Sharing is Caring

Some secrets involve behaviors we would consider 'immoral'.
Such as.....

Some secrets have to do with 'connectedness' – our intimate relations
with others.
Such as....

Some secrets have to do with 'insight', which has to do with keeping
things confidential that are told to you.
Such as...



Sharing is Caring

It is no surprise to say that it is the secrets that are high on the
"immorality" dimension that create the most shame and are reluctant
to share with anyone else.

Again, no surprise that secrets on the other two dimensions do not
necessarily cause us harm.



Why Secrets Harm Us

The reason that secrets harm us is that we ruminate about them.
They don't go away just because we continue to push them away, each
time they come into conscious awareness.

We mull them over in our minds, often generating a negative
emotional state about ourselves and reinforcing old ideas about our
self worth and others' kindness and caring for us.

In other words, we judge both ourselves and anyone else we may
contemplate telling.



Transparency

- I think it's important that in recovery, we let one person know everything about ourselves.
- That is a way of ensuring that the shame-based secrets we all hold onto in when we come into recovery, don't undermine us down the road.
- Most of us crossed lines in our addiction that would be classified "immoral".



How to Keep a Secret Without Hurting Others

Consider the following 3 statements:

1. There is no harm in having this secret (immorality).
2. This secret protects someone I know. (connectedness)
3. I have good understanding into this secret. (insight)

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Who To Reveal To?

- a mentor
- a sponsor
- a clergy
- a therapist



To Reveal or Conceal

For You: Reveal

Pick the right person based on their demonstration of integrity. It must be someone you trust will hold your information in confidence and not judge you.

For others: Conceal

Do not share with others the things about yourself or things you have heard about them, that will do no good and just cause further suffering.