

Our Secrets Make Us Sick

Throughout the course of a lifetime we face all types of situations. Some of them are more difficult than others. Some examples might be emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, the loss of a loved one through death, divorce, rape, having had an abortion or any time involving neglect or mistreatment. When these kinds of situations occur, we find ourselves struggling with anger, sadness, fear, resentment, pain, hurt, guilt, grief and shame. Sometimes we feel that these emotions are too painful or too frightening to deal with so we hold onto them, hoping they will go away but they do not.

Whether we are aware of it or not, these unresolved situations, these secrets, are eating away at us. They affect our self-esteem, happiness, and relationships with friends and family. They cause problems with our sleep, appetite, concentration and energy level. Anxiety and physical problems such as ulcers and headaches can be symptoms of these secrets. All kinds of problems which keep us from being the person we dream of being begin to grow as a result of not dealing with the feelings associated with the situation.

We may strive to divert our attention through overworking, drugs, alcohol and withdrawal from those around us, anything that will help us and protect us from these secrets. By not talking about the situation and by holding onto these feelings, we are draining ourselves of energy which could be invested in more positive and healthy outlets. In other words, we are giving the secret power over us. Some of us learn to do this while growing up. We learn to withhold our unacceptable feelings and we act according to what we think we ought to be rather than what is. Living this way keeps people from really knowing us.

Being asked to share our secrets can be very frightening. What will happen if I share my secret? Will I lose control? Will my family abandon me? Will my friends reject me? It is these kinds of fears which keep us from ever sharing our secrets and they keep us from experiencing the kind of happiness we desire. We often resist growth by saying that the feelings are just too painful to deal with. Another way we resist is by saying, What good will it do, I'll never forget what happened. By speaking the unspeakable, we take the power away from the secrets. The truth frees us from the painful feelings. This is what leads us to growth and happiness. This is an important part in therapy.

Here are some important things to keep in mind in regard to your feelings and living a better life.

Learn to trust your feelings.

Find someone you can trust and feel comfortable talking to.

Be open and honest with yourself.

Allow yourself to feel.

Remember you are in charge of your feelings.

By integrating this approach into our lives, we will begin to see positive growth in ourselves, our careers and our relationships with our spouse, children and families.

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