

Secretive

The secretive person is given to concealing his own private feelings, moods, and hopes. He may do so for reasons of self-interest, or from mistrust of his social environment, but he may also be a 'secretive person,' whose personality is 'not open.' There could be many reasons for the making of a secretive personality: child abuse, which closed this person down; sibling rivalry, which led him to keep his secrets to himself; addictive or secret desires which the individual would feel unable to share. Whatever the reason for the secretive personality, the results can be either creative—the artistic personality, or self-destructive—the neurotic personality which is trapped in its own needs.

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Examples

1 When I first masturbated, in a hidden area of the forest behind our house. I was blown away with the intensity of the experience, in which total pleasure blended with a fierce pain. I could not have described that sensation to my parents, both because it was indescribable, and because I did not have a pathway into parental confession. Consequently, I kept the secret, of this mysterious and powerful event, inside me, where I could turn to it again. Because I was secretive about this masturbation, I developed a voracious sense of guilt about the behavior. The very essence of human guilt, enclosure and self-entrapment, was radiantly encapsulated in my sense of this act which was mine alone. To this day, I am reluctant to name the masturbation action, and never one to recommend it.

2 To be effective, in one's secretiveness, would mean to hide one's secret from oneself, which is of course impossible. Or is it? Is not what Freud called the unconscious a zone in which secrets have been hidden? When we hide secrets in our unconscious, we try to 'dispose of them' more deeply than we had done when first we made ordinary events into secrets. The bringing to light of secrets hidden in the unconscious—my desire for the barmaid's ass—would then be a way of freeing those secrets from their secret condition, and, as it were, 'laying them on the table.' A secret, then, is only an open truth which has passed into a semi hidden state, which can be turned, through sublimation, into a more deeply hidden state, which can itself be laid on the table through analysis, as Freudian thought might have put. In that formulation, a secret is itself nothing at all but a highly processed event in the 'real world.'