

What Keeping Secrets Does To Your Brain

Why Secret Keeping Could Be Costing You More Than You Think

Everyone you know is keeping secrets.

Here's an example:
Our client had to let an executive go due to poor performance. The executive was well-loved and many employees reported to him.



He had to keep the termination a secret. He watched what he said and was careful not to reveal the secret, even when discussing plans that involved the executive.

He felt anxious and a little depressed. He thought about it obsessively, and felt inauthentic and isolated.

If you've had to keep a secret before, does this sound familiar?

The True Cost of Keeping A Secret - it's Not What You Think

97% of people have one or more secrets at any given time.* But most common is 13 secrets per person...whoa!

Secrets come from the workplace and personal life. They include preferences (you don't like your mother-in-law's casserole, but pretend you do) all the way to full-out breaches of trust (infidelity or even embezzlement).

Secrets damage well-being.



Secrets damage focus and decision-making.

Resisting, self-censoring, ruminating eat up energy. Anxiety and depression (from anticipating revealing the secret) take an enormous toll.

When you're distracted by a secret, you're not present. Cognitive biases take over.

Emotional resilience is reduced, sleep is compromised, you

You have less behavioral choice. You tell yourself scary stories instead

drop to 50% or less, you become more irritable.

of reframing. You're out of rapport with yourself.

*Thanks to NLM for their research: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28481618/>

Your amygdala is on overdrive (irritability, quick to drop into fight/-flight/freeze).



You're experiencing the opposite of being mindful. Here's what happens in your brain:



The hippocampus is compromised due to excessive cortisol (stress), so learning, memory, and immune system are compromised.

Your pre-frontal cortex is offline. Your ability to communicate, collaborate, innovate - basically be your best - is down the tubes.

Reveal Your Secret To A Trusted Source



Often we hold our secrets close because we feel guilt, shame, blame.



When you reveal the secret it loses its power. You can brainstorm, get an unbiased perspective, and no longer feel excluded from others.



Share your challenging secret to get a fresh perspective and stop suffering!



When leaders use these tools to help their teams move forward, they get results like these*:



5-15+ hrs/wk more strategic work



35-50%+ Increased Productivity



67-100+% increased engagement in teams

*Stats are from over 1,000 of SmartTribes Institute's coaching and workshop clients

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