

## EXPOSING OUR SECRETS

What was it like to come face-to-face with your inner critic(s), demons, the messages that hold you back? Were you able to experience lightness and freedom on the other side, if only for a moment?

I'm feeling called to share one more perspective about inner critics from my personal experience. For decades, my critics lived in me and I was very careful to make sure they were hidden from view. I carried around a mind full of secrets, inner messages that played over and over in my brain even as I was "doing life", talking with you, working, living.

Living? Not really. My hope was that by ignoring my secret fears and insecurities, by stuffing them, keeping them in the background, hiding them, ignoring them, they would just go away. The problem, however, is that it didn't work! Imagine this visual:

*You live in a one room apartment. Space is a precious commodity and keeping your belongings to a minimum, to the critical few that make life possible, enjoyable and clutter free, is vital. Over time, however, you find it hard to let go of belongings that you don't really need: clothes that don't fit, broken instruments you simply can't part with, gifts from others which simply don't resonate with who you are becoming.*

*Instead of discarding these or passing them on to someone who can use them, you put them in a black garbage bag and set the bag in the corner. Over and over, item after item, bag after bag, year after year you proceed in this manner until one day you wake up and realize that your one room apartment is dark, overcrowded, and impossible to move around in.*

You see, like those bagged items, our secret fears, messages from our inner critics, don't disappear through neglect. Perhaps

it is an oxymoron, but kept hidden, they grow stronger! Only in sharing them with safe others does their power dissipate.

*"What? I am supposed to talk about those tapes that play over and over in my mind and remind me that I am not good enough? I am supposed to let you see my vulnerability, the insanity in my mind?"*

Yes, friends. The secret fears expressed by our inner critics are probably the most powerful force holding us back from living life to the full, becoming all we can be, expressing our gifts and talents freely in service in this lifetime. Perhaps some specific examples are in order. I'll try to be brief.

*In my childhood, (Mom, forgive me!) my mom cut my hair. Without going into detail, she cut it the way SHE wanted to, or perhaps the only way she knew how. I don't really know. But as a child, I knew that I didn't like it and I felt powerless. I remember being intensely embarrassed and self-conscious after a fresh haircut.*

*This inner turmoil didn't go away with age. I developed a real phobia around haircuts. I never wanted it to be enough of a change that anyone would notice. I even cut my own hair for about 20 years in order to remain in control of this situation.*

*When I did finally dare to trust another beautician who came strongly recommended by my best friend, I felt so sorry for her!!! Imagine her reaction when I said, "I hate haircuts. I have this phobia. Don't make a mistake! Don't do too much. Cut it THIS way". And that was just the beginning!*

*Perhaps you want to know what happened...*

*Exposing my secret and sharing my inner pain was met with compassion. Kelly had a great sense of humor and an understanding heart. Over the years, she helped me*

*change my hairstyle gradually into something I am currently very comfortable with.*

You may be laughing profusely that hair could be such a big deal - keep laughing! I am too. And for one who usually downplays the importance of physical appearance, preferring to put her energy into matters of the heart and soul, this secret sure has stolen a lot of my energy through the years.

Want another one? Here goes.

*I am a musician and, for the last 15 years, a songwriter. No secret there. My songs are available to everyone. What is a secret, though, is this:*

*I rarely listen to music.*

*You heard me. When I am home alone, the space is silent except when I am singing or playing. Often a friend will say, "You should hear this song - you'd love it!" or "Are you going to the concert tomorrow?" And I cringe. How do I tell them that I'm not interested? I am afraid to expose my secret and afraid to tell them, "No - you're making an assumption, I don't really want to ...". So I cover up, lie a bit, say I am busy the night of the concert, or listen to the song anyway and find something good to report back.*

*This secret, this being untrue to me, is draining.*

*So why, you ask, do I keep it a secret? You may also be asking, why don't you listen to music? Wouldn't it help you to expand your own musical abilities? Aren't you interested?*

*Well, here are some answers. I don't listen because it interferes with the music that wants to flow from me, to be created by my inner artist. I don't listen because it gets stuck in my head and goes round and round and drives me nuts! I don't listen because music is, for me, about the message, the meaning, the intense*

connection that I feel when it resonates with my soul. And I **love** to sing, to make music, to experience the magic of breath and tone flowing through and out of my body, out from my fingers on the keyboard or guitar. I am so **not** a passive recipient! I don't listen to music that doesn't delight my spirit. And lots of music doesn't. Would I be a better musician if I did? Most probably! But that isn't my dream, to be a better, more well-rounded, musician.

**Why keep all of this a secret to those well meaning folks who offer me music?** Well, two things. First, have you heard of codependency? Codependency says: "I am afraid I'll hurt your feelings." Now, I don't believe anymore that we hurt one another's feelings. We choose whether or not to feel hurt. Nevertheless, I still care about you and think about your feelings.

**The other reason is, I believe, deeper and more important to our discussion here.** Only recently have I become clear enough to share this with you and finally let my secret go! First, I had to become clear in myself about the impact that others' music has on my inner creator. It often shuts her down. Second, I had to be willing to admit to myself the purpose that music has in my life. Finally, and this step has been an ongoing process with many things in my life:

**I had to be willing to be me.**

That means, owning who I am, my likes and dislikes, the way my mind works, what delights my soul. Be Jeanne - not some watered down version of Jeanne who is living out someone else's dreams, doing what you think I should, listening to music **your** way.

Think about this. My secret around not listening to music was actually preventing me from sharing my gifts and talents with the world!

**What about you?**  
**What secrets do you harbor?**  
**What secret "message to self" lives in the recesses**  
**of your being and holds you back?**

Before I leave this topic of music, there is one major exception to my non-listening habit. In the car, especially on long road trips, I listen over and over and over to the music of a few amazing singer/songwriters whose creativity and courage have been a deep well of inspiration for me. Go to:

<http://www.SongsForYourSpirit.com>

and click on *Music*, then *Inspiration* to learn more!

Without their willingness to risk, dare to make a statement and pave their own way, and their generosity of spirit in the form of encouragement and acknowledgment for my work, I wouldn't be writing to you now. Yes, I have been inspired, supported, encouraged, held, kicked in the rear! And I am forever grateful. I'd be a liar, however, if I omitted one more secret here. *I get absolutely furious when I hear an inspirational song that is easy enough for me to sing and share with others and then learn that there is no printed music for the song!* How am I share it with you if it isn't written down? Sure, I could figure it out and write it down myself. I am a trained musician. That, however, is VERY time consuming and sometimes doesn't feel worth it. There is so much I'd rather be doing!

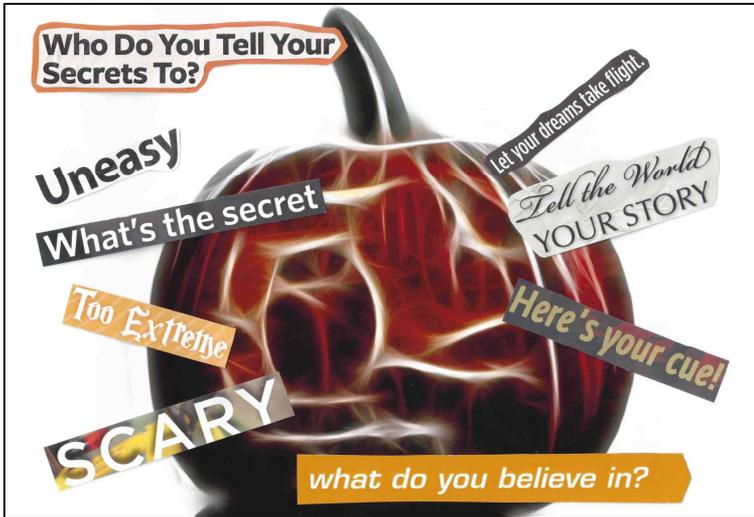
I'll stop. I must admit that I'm worried that for those of you non-musicians reading this, I may have just lost you in a bunch of mumbo-jumbo! That would be very sad since the topic of this chapter, exposing our secrets, is SO crucial to a happy, healthy, creative, vital life. I certainly don't want to lose you now!

**Will you give me another chance?**

Thank you for that. You'll get a bit more practice with secret identification on the next page. And I have a hunch they'll return later in the book. There is a saying in 12 Step recovery

from addiction: *secrets make us sick*. It is so true! The addict secretly uses their substance, staying sick. The rest of us who harbor secrets are not being true to ourselves, not allowing "the all of us" to engage in this life. Secrets take energy from what we might otherwise be doing, creating, and expanding into! And, that friends, is a waste of our very awesome lives. This world really does need each and every one of us living this life to the fullest: creatively, joyously, freely.

## Your turn: Explore Your Inner Landscape



The questions below are from the **SECRETS** Inspiration Card. Bring your heart, body and spirit to this moment. Clear your thoughts. Select one or more questions. Respond in a way that *honors you now*. Know that you can always choose differently next time! You may write, draw, speak aloud, dance, meditate. Regardless of the medium, let your deep inner wisdom respond.

What secret stops you cold?

What edge lights guide you?

What frightens you?

What is too extreme?

What is not enough?

What cue have you missed?

What do you believe?

What do you want to believe?

What is too scary?

What if uneasy was a sign?

What dark pathway sucks you in?

What is your story?

What do you dream?

What dream is ready for flight?

What secret society supports you?

What does the world need from you?

What if it goes to the grave with you?

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