

## 18th Storyworth: What Did You Hide From Your Parents As A Child?

I was never a very secretive person when it came to my parents, probably because I might have had more liberties than most similar kids. At least until I reached college age. Things had changed quite a bit by then, but more on that later ;-)

Since I had been able to safely do so on my own, I had earned my own money doing odd jobs with yard and lawn maintenance since before I was ten years old. And since my parents were not giving me any of that income, they rightly (at least in MY mind ;-)) felt I had a right to decide how it should be spent. Of course, they still covered my basic living expenses, like food, shelter and clothing. But discretionary funds were mine to earn and decide how to use on my own.

One of the things that meant was that I tried smoking. Both my parents at the time were smokers, and so when I started at about 9, stupid as it was, I made no effort to discuss it with them. In that way I suppose it was “hiding” it, although I never viewed it that way, nor made any active effort in that way. And you can readily see how non-committal I was toward smoking when I soon stopped buying cigarettes because they went up by a quarter a pack. You will need to look a LONG way back to see when THAT happened. So I never really got “hooked” on them, and they were gone by age 11.

What replaced them was soft core porn – aka “girlie magazines”. And those I hid carefully, although I’ll bet my parents were both more aware than I would have imagined at the time. I think it was inevitable, simply because the hiding places and the results in my laundry could not possibly have been missed ;-)) Eventually, I even acquired 8mm films and a projector, both of which were crude, and by comparison with whatever can be found on the internet today were laughable. But I’ll bet every kid goes through some of the same exploratory at different times in their early teens. It is part of growing up.

One in particular I still have to this day; “My Secret Life” is supposed to be an autobiography written by a wealthy Victorian gentleman who supposedly “lived for sex”. I found a paperback version which left nothing EXCEPT my imagination to my imagination as I read it. I still find it fascinating and educational to read, as it suggests that there is very little new under the sun. We have simply become more graphic as technology has enabled more widespread distribution of what has essentially existed since we became humans. For whatever reason, and it seems to be related to gender specifics only in matters of degree, we humans seem to be excited by someone else’s sex life. Maybe because that creates some added desires in our own. I am reminded of the double entendre statement; “No”. “Don’t”. “Stop”. Which starts as if seeking to avoid activity, only to seemingly seek it out as the speed of repeating the three words increases. To quote the Shakespearean; “Methinks the lady doth protest too much”.

I also tended to hide my personal snacks from my parents. Eating was a way I had for coping with whatever was bothering me, and I had at least as much as my share of THAT as anyone else. But I was not really secretive so much as I kept it to myself, which is mostly how I lived most things in my life.

And, of course, once I actually started dating, the absolute LAST people I would ever have discussed THAT with were my parents. My Ex, Lynne, spent part of a summer living at my house after we had become engaged, which was well after we had become sexually active. I doubt seriously that my Mom didn’t figure it out, but she tolerated it so long as we seemed discreet.

That was not always easy to do, especially living in a place like Hyde Park where it seemed everyone knew everything about everybody else' life. So when we were interrupted while parked in the woods nearby the house we thought our geese were cooked, so to speak. But we heard nothing further about the episode, thankfully, and suspect very little of what we had been doing was all that unusual. Again, part of becoming mature. We were both heading for our senior year at college. But we still tried to keep it from my parents.

I have noted in earlier stories that my grades were underwhelming at best, so rushing home to show off report cards and the like would have been ridiculous. Most were shared only grudgingly because, like today, signatures were required by parents. But it takes little imagination to think I likely was not in any hurry to share most of my grades with my parents. And although my Mom had been the one who suggested my ultimate college at Clarkson, I really doubt she nor my Dad understood exactly what an engineer actually did for a living, not least because there are so many different types of engineers, running the gamut from guys like me who were more like educated mechanics to the purely theoretical guys who do structures and aircraft, or what I describe as "rocket science", where the math is a LOT more sophisticated than I ever got near, once graduated, except for one specific project at Fafnir where I adapted diamond roll dressers to Bryant plunge grinders, so needed to determine wheel loading forces for hydraulic systems design (which, even if shared with my parents, would have made their heads spin ;-)

I suppose had there even BEEN an internet when I was a teen I would have been drawn to the available porn at the time. There is little doubt today that it is almost impossible to prevent a child from accessing it. But when I consider some of the alternatives kids today COULD be involved with, and I frame it in terms of the reality of how the activity really relates to propagating our species, that we still seem to think it even NEEDS hiding seems somewhat absurd, even as we look at what passes for "news" every night using that same medium. Somehow, I cannot see why seeing people in the act of reproduction, when presented in its simplest form, should be hidden, while we present death and destruction as so commonplace. Yet we seem to still be ashamed of our own desires. If there might be ANYTHING associated with porn which might justify hiding it, I would think it might be the objectification of women especially. But how to explain that women seem to seek out porn themselves, and my eye is not so finely tuned as to pick out much difference between what I have observed women watching from that enjoyed by men. But what do I know?! ;-)

I do know that SOME porn is clearly offensive to some people. But some people, myself included, are offended by what passes for "religion", which I find to very much be the "opiate of the masses", especially as I know my own Mom was a true believer, even as I also know she might better have hidden some of HER activities in that regard from ME. And don't even get me started about my Dad and HIS beliefs and paradoxes.

So I guess I have not really been as open about this subject story as perhaps I might. Some things are still best to remain private, although I cannot imagine that anyone reading this would not guess pretty much where my tastes in porn might lie, and they would need to spend very little time in my RV before they would find much of my "stash", although the vast majority of it would seem almost lame by today's standards. I consider myself a pretty "typical" consumer of such materials. And while stores usually hid them behind the counter, probably to keep the kids from drooling on the pages, I know of NO evidence of actual harm from their exposure. I think it was just a part of growing up.

And, no, Mom & Dad, I didn't go blind, try as I might ;-)

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