

DO YOU KNOW WHEN TO KEEP A SECRET?

How well can you keep your lip buttoned when you have confidential information that many others would like to know about? Do you usually succumb to the urge to pass along choice tidbits of gossip? Or are you a member of that rare breed which has no trouble keeping a secret no matter how large or small it is?

Women have long been regarded as a poor risk in keeping a secret but there is no shortage of men who have also divulged secrets. One of the main reasons why a secret is so hard to keep is that possession of confidential information confers a strong sense of power and importance, especially if the secret would become a bombshell if revealed. The special knowledge can sometimes give one a hold on the main figures in the scenario.

When to keep a secret, and when not to, can be a tough decision. There are occasions when the best interests of the individual and society may mandate the violation of a secret. To test your ability to keep a secret, answer the following questions:

- |   | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. If you learned that another employee was stealing costly supplies, should you report it to your employer?  | _____      | _____     |
| 2. If you had decisive proof that the girlfriend/boyfriend of your best friend was having a secret affair with another man/woman, should you inform your friend?  | _____      | _____     |
| 3. Your cousin is engaged to marry a fine young man/woman. By chance, you discover that his/her father was an epileptic. To reveal this might conceivably terminate the engagement. Should you tell?          | _____      | _____     |
| 4. A friend who has a large family and earns a modest salary mentions that he/she buys merchandise at unusually low prices from a man that you know has often sold stolen goods. Should you tell your friend? | _____      | _____     |
| 5. Your brother/sister confides that he/she has observed the brother/sister of your close friend taking hard drugs. Should you relay this to your friend?   | _____      | _____     |
| 6. Shopping in your local drug store you observe a young woman furtively slipping an expensive bottle of perfume into her handbag. Should you tip off the proprietor?   | _____      | _____     |

(cont'd...)

YES NO

7. A pleasant former neighbor who is highly qualified applies for a job with your firm and asks for your recommendation of his/her character. You know that for a short period he/she had been under psychiatric care. Should you mention this to your employer? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In an unguarded moment, a popular fellow employee reveals that he/she is a homosexual but hastily requests that you not mention this to other staff members. Should you comply? \_\_\_\_\_
9. A relative adopted a baby without disclosing this to the child. Years later, now an adult, the adoptee suddenly asks whether he/she was adopted. Should you tell the truth? \_\_\_\_\_
10. You accidentally come upon absolute proof that your family doctor, who has been very devoted and helpful to your family and many others, is a "phony" who lacks a medical degree. Should you "blow the whistle" on him? \_\_\_\_\_
11. You were invited to a New Year's Party by a close friend. You learn that a mutual and equally close friend was not invited. Would you inform him/her about the party? \_\_\_\_\_
12. You receive a substantial raise but your friend and fellow worker, who had also hoped for a raise, received none. Would you tell him/her about your raise? \_\_\_\_\_

SCORING

The most desirable response earns four points. The least desirable, one. A score ranging from 40-48 is above average and suggests a strong capacity to keep confidences. A score of 23-39 is average while a score of 22 and below is below average and implies weak ability to keep a secret.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>YOUR SCORE</u>
1.	4	1	_____
2.	4	1	_____
3.	4	1	_____
4.	4	1	_____
5.	4	1	_____
6.	4	1	_____
7.	4	1	_____
8.	4	1	_____
9.	4	1	_____
10.	4	1	_____
11.	1	4	_____
12.	1	4	_____

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_