

Confess

Secrets, lies and confessions...

HARLEQUIN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Secrets. We've all got them. It's what we do with them that makes them dangerous, terrifying, thrilling, shocking, happy and ultimately romantic!

Should we keep our skeletons in the closet or set them free? If we do confess, when and under what circumstances should we make our confessions? If we don't confess will it prevent us from getting closer to the ones we love?

Most Americans think confessing is the way to go. Almost three in four Americans (73% of women and 72% of men) admitted that they felt better after making a confession. But that sense of relief often comes at the end of a long and arduous process of convincing ourselves that a confession is the best course of action. The truth is, while we all have the ability to get closer to the people in our lives by revealing ourselves to them, most of us don't know where to begin. We don't know how to express our romantic sentiments; we don't know how to come clean.

To best understand today's romantic environment, we decided to survey more than 2,000 men and women across the United States and Canada.* In the age of confessions we wanted to find out what impact honesty really has on romance, the truth behind the lies we tell, where romance is heading and how the confessions we make play a role in defining our romantic experience.

What we discovered is that at the heart of every confession lies the truth about who we are. And those truths, however extreme or dull they may seem, are what make us romantic and attractive to others.

Confessions are nothing new, but now more than ever we are fascinated by the way they shape our relationships with others. What this means to men and women everywhere is that confessions are about freeing ourselves of guilt, confiding in loved ones and ultimately bringing ourselves closer to the people in our lives. At Harlequin, we believe that revealing the truth and being honest with yourself is the sexiest quality anyone can possess.

*The survey was conducted online at www.harlequinromancereport.com (the "Website") by Harlequin Enterprises Limited ("Harlequin") between September 26, 2007 and October 31, 2007. The survey was open to all adults over the age of 18. The Website was visited by more than 3,000 men and women from around the world. Survey results reflect the opinions of respondents and do not necessarily reflect those of Harlequin or its affiliated companies.

Confessions are romantic...

- Almost half of men (41%) and more than half of women (51%) believe trust and honesty to be the most important qualities in a relationship. Oddly, listening ranked very low at only 3% importance to both men and women. Taking the cake for least important quality in a relationship is money at only 1% importance for both sexes.
- Interestingly, 40% of men and 44% of women admitted to having snooped through their partner's emails/text messages/instant messages, private letters and/or mementos from previous partners. Funny that the same men and women value trust/honesty as the most important quality in a relationship.
- The good news is that only 22% of men and 18% of women ever regretted a confession they've made, while 72% of men and 73% of women actually felt better after making a confession.
- Forty-two percent of men and almost as many women (41%) admitted that their anniversary with their significant other is the most important date of the year.

Just what are some of those regretted confessions?

- "I lied about how many partners I'd been with before my husband. I hated the idea of him thinking less of me but now I feel this huge lie between us."
- "I told my girlfriend that I was attracted to someone else. I've never seen her so hurt."
- "I revealed too much information about my previous partner to my current partner. He said he wanted to know but I don't think he'll ever ask about my past again."
- "Every confession I've ever made while drinking. They never come out right and I only end up hurting the people I love."
- "Telling my friend that I didn't like her fiancé and that I didn't think she should marry him."

Liar liar pants on fire...

- One in two Americans (53% of men and 54% of women) have told a lie to get out of a bad date.
- A shocking number of men (32%) and women (43%) have given a fake phone number to someone they were not interested in.
- While many men (42%) and women (35%) admitted to having sent a sexually explicit text message/email/instant message to someone other than their significant other, only 16% of men and 18% of women said they would confess this directly to their partner.
- Next time you run into your cute new neighbor at the grocery store it may not be by accident. Forty-five percent of men and 55% of women have planned to bump into someone on purpose.
- A surprising number of men and women (63%) agreed that honesty isn't always the best policy and that lies are sometimes okay.

A little white lie never hurt anyone...

- Sixty-one percent of men and 50% of women agreed that it is okay to lie when your significant other asks, "Do I look fat in this?"
- One in two women (47%) have lied about their weight when asked, compared with only 20% of men.
- If a friend ever asks what you think of their significant other and you can't muster a single compliment, you can join 46% of men and 45% of women who believe it's okay to lie in this situation.
- Thankfully, most people know better than to lie when filling out their taxes. Still, 10% of men and 6% of women admitted to having been less than honest on their tax return.
- When a cashier gives you back more change than you deserve, 23% of men and women believe it is okay to accept it instead of pointing out the error.



Where romance is headed. . .

- Fifty-three percent of men and 54% of women have researched a potential date or significant other (i.e., Googled, checked for an online profile, searched MySpace or Facebook.)
- The art of romance. Thirty-six percent of men and 74% of women enjoy reading romance novels. Perhaps for inspiration?
- Almost one-third of men (29%) and women (26%) have been in a relationship that began online.
- Similarly, 42% of men and 39% of women have created an online profile in the hope of making a love connection.
- A surprising number of men (57%) and women (61%) have had a crush on a co-worker. What's more, 33% of men and almost as many women (32%) have gone so far as to sleep with someone they work with. Thankfully, only 3% of men and 2% of women have done so in the hope of this leading to a promotion.
- While many men (39%) and women (46%) confess their secrets to their partners, many more are confessing them to their friends—men 62% and women 69%.

“Almost half of men and women would confess to flirting with someone else.”

If you knew you could get away with it...

We've all done things we're not exactly proud of, but is it easier to do those things when there are no consequences? We asked men and women what they would do if no one ever found out.

- An alarming 16% of men and 28% of women confessed that they would undergo cosmetic surgery if no one ever found out about it.
- There are a few men out there (8%) who would give their fiancé a cubic zirconium rather than a real diamond.
- Whether you are getting away with it or not, 39% of men and 35% of women still have their ex's phone number saved in their phone or BlackBerry.

Dare I say it...

Some confessions roll off the tongue without reservation while others are harder to get out. Here are some of the confessions men and women have admitted they would make to their significant other.

- Almost half of men (41%) and women (45%) would confess to flirting with someone else. The number decreases slightly when the stakes rise: twenty-nine percent of men and 30% of women would confess to kissing someone else.
- Sixteen percent of men and 18% of women would confess to sending sexually explicit emails/text messages/instant messages to someone else. Does this mean we think online transgressions are more excusable?