

Website lets people shine light on dark secrets

March 2 2012, by Glenn Chapman



This file illustration photo shows a person looking at a selection of postcards. Frank Warren began his 'Post Secret' project in 2004 by printing 3,000 postcards and handing them out in the Washington DC area, asking people to anonymously share a heartfelt secret they had never told anyone.

People around the world share their deep secrets with Frank Warren and he, in turn, reveals them to all.

Confessions drawn, pasted or written on postcards flow relentlessly into his mailbox and Warren provides as many as possible with time in the spotlight at his website, PostSecret.com.

"I've never been a person growing up that people told their secrets to," Warren told AFP after a presentation at the prestigious [TED conference](#) that wraps in southern California on Friday.

"In my life now, people don't walk up to me and tell me secrets, but I never get tired of getting postcards. I still go to the post box early."

The Maryland man described himself as a typical suburban dad and small business owner whose life was turned around by a project launched in 2004 as a diversion from his "lucrative but unsatisfying" document delivery company.

Warren began by printing 3,000 postcards and handing them out in the Washington DC area, asking people to anonymously share a heartfelt secret they had never told anyone.

The idea spread virally, with people making or buying their own postcards and sending them to PostSecret from countries around the world.

Warren showed a postcard made from half of a Starbucks coffee paper cup and bearing the message "I give decaf to customers who are rude to me."

Another postcard was from someone who confided "I used to work with a bunch of uptight religious people so sometimes I didn't wear panties and just smiled and chuckled to myself."

One [confession](#) arrived in the form of a sealed envelope bearing a message that inside were the torn bits of a suicide note "I didn't use - I feel like the happiest man on Earth now."

A postcard bearing a collage of pictures of Hollywood actors bore a message that one of them was "the father of my son, he pays me a lot to keep his secret."

Many secrets sent to the website involve [loneliness](#), [self-harm](#), or [eating](#)

[disorders](#), according to its creator.

"One of the biggest surprises is that when we find the strength to share a deep secret, instead of making us weird it connects us to our deepest humanity," Warren said. "Everyone has a secret that could break your heart."

Warren displayed a picture of him next to a pyramid of a half million postcards bearing secrets. He updates PostSecret.com every Sunday, trying to create a theme with the confessions.

"I tapped into something full of mystery and wonder," Warren said. "Secrets can remind us of the countless human dramas playing out in the lives of people around us."

PostSecret claims the distinction of being the most visited advertising-free blog on the Internet and is credited with inspiring a student in Canada to launch IFoundYourCamera.net website that connects people with lost pictures.

Warren supports the website with money from his document shipping business, and successful books featuring collections of confessions. Some PostSecret postcards have made it to the Museum of Modern Art.

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