

Keyholes

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life, learning, metaphor

<https://www.storiesspace.com/stories/musings/keyholes.aspx>

Growing up in the 50's and 60's, and that's the 1950's and 1960's for you smartasses, the doors in most homes had keyholes. These keyholes were made to be operated by large bulky skeleton keys. Usually one key would open nearly every door, so if you got one it was best to keep it hidden as your passkey to untold secrets and fortunes. As you might imagine, these skeleton keys required a substantial opening to fit into and twist. To an imaginative and devious young lad, these keyholes often provided a peephole into the room beyond. Until my sister wised up and stuffed the hole with toilet paper I used to get quite the show when her friends came for a sleepover. Later, as I reflected on my misspent youth, I remember the irony of those keyholes. Their purpose to lock and keep safe the secrets beyond the door. Yet the opening of the very same lock so large as to give those secrets away. It isn't such a big leap to compare our lives online to that room with a keyhole. Keeping the real us with our real lives and our real fears hidden. The internet becoming a keyhole by which we allow

others to peak at that portion of us we feel comfortable showing. Obviously, just such a premeditated glimpse of the people we connect with lets players and predators alike practice their posing and prevarications on the unsuspecting. On the flipside though, this limited peek is a nice way of sampling each other without total exposure. I didn't find out until much later that my sister always knew I was looking through her keyhole, and she chose when to fill the opening with toilet paper. We are all skeleton keys. We run around slipping ourselves into everyone's locks just hoping that when we twist it, the lock will make this tic-click and the door will swing open. The internet is a hallway of doors and locks. Some open easily. Others require some effort. And still others won't open under any circumstances and a keyhole is the best you can expect. Those of us who are greyer and longer in tooth will remember those simpler times. We met people the old fashioned way. Words were just as important, but so was the body language, the smiles, the winks, and those little flirts and teases that passed back and forth. The next step was usually known. The successes were nearly immediately felt, but so were the failures. In this entire earth environment that we move about in, keyholes seem to be the necessary evil. Better to offer a taste than a meal, and find comfort in the safety of your monitor. I remember as a boy when I asked a girl to dance and she said "no", there was no place to hide. You just tried to walk away as normal as possible and hoped your pants weren't tucked up in your butt. On occasion, if you are as lucky as I have been, you turn that key, the door swings open and the most amazing people are inside waiting for you. I treasure my friends. Even the ones who have left me. Especially them, for it was I who let them down. And to those I have yet to meet, well, take the paper out of your keyhole.