

# Masking reality

Business



When life throws lemons at you, find yourself a mask and hide from life.

What if we lived in a world where the right thing to do was to hide from your problems and avoid the truth? What would it be like if everyone acted as someone else and rejected who they truly were? Imagine a world where everyone was given their own mask when they were born.

It would be something handy that would camouflage them and protect from embarrassment, bullies, and other things damaging to the human soul. The world might look a little something like this... It starts as a normally average day. You wake up around six, eat cereal for breakfast, and then head off to meet your friends at the bus stop. Immediately upon your arrival at the bus stop, you check to make sure your mask is securely in your backpack. It's there for your protection; you do not want to get hurt today. Once you have checked, you start talking with your friends, about nothing in particular.

Your friend starts telling stupid jokes, so you throw on your mask so you appear to be laughing, when in the realm of reality in your head, you are pleading with them to stop. Soon the bus comes, and you climb up the steps gingerly. Once on the bus, you sit with your friend, the high-maintenance one with all the relationship problems. She immediately starts telling you about how her latest boyfriend was a jerk and how he wounded her pride, and you gently slip on your mask again, to conceal the fact that you really do not care about her problems, but are instead thinking about what you are going to have for lunch. But does she know you are not listening? Of course not, you have your mask on.

The bell for first period rings and you slip into your seat just as your teacher starts telling you about all the “exciting” things you will learn about today. “Exciting” to you sounds more like catching up on some sleep, so once again you place your mask on your face and appear to be listening, while in actuality, you are sleeping peacefully. The day goes on with little to no difference than every other day. There are several other instances where you much put your mask on in order to avoid having to actually feel sorry for someone, or really mean what you say or do. God forbid you would actually have to genuinely feel an emotion, as opposed to just putting on your mask and pretending you care. As you walk down the hall, you hear the punk next to you poke his friend and point at the big pimple waiting to erupt like Mt.

Vesuvius on your face. They instantaneously start giggling like wild hyenas, and you turn bright red with embarrassment. You turn away from the bullies and slip on your life-saving mask. Now you are safe. Now no one will be able to tell what is really going on behind the facade. Finally, it is the moment you have been waiting for; lunch.

You plop down at your table and start munching on your carrots. You’d really love to have a piece of that chocolate cake that they are serving, but you are afraid that people will think you are unhealthy if you eat it, so you force that mask back on your face and pretend that you absolutely love carrots. To avoid thinking about the cake even more than you already are, you start up a conversation with your friend about how you are totally stressed because of all the homework you have been getting lately. She appears to be listening, but for some reason, deep down you feel that she is probably too concerned with her own issues to care about yours, so you realize that you

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are pretty much just talking to yourself. She must have her mask on. Then suddenly, bam! It hits you like a ton of bricks.

Never before has it bothered you that you are living in a fake world full of fake people with fake masks. However, now it's like your emotions are knocking at the door of your reality, begging to be let in and dusted off. You try pulling off your own mask, but it seems to be stuck on with some sort of force to be reckoned with; a kind of emotionless glue that you have been adding for your whole life. It takes you a minute to realize that you have made your entire life about being what everyone else wants you to be, instead of choosing what to become for yourself. You act, feel, and speak the way the world expects you to. All at once you feel like a puppet, being controlled by an evil, cold-blooded, impersonal master, and the more you think about it, the more this unimpassioned being begins to look familiar.

When you observe a little harder, you realize that it looks a lot like you. You are holding yourself back from the real world. You are leading a fake life. Just because we do not have our own masks to hide ourselves in this world, does not mean that we do not do something similar whenever we are faced with a challenging or emotionally heavy situation. Think about the last time you genuinely cared for a friend's sticky situation, or stuck up for yourself. The next time life throws you lemons, grab those lemons and tell them who is boss, genuinely and sensibly.

You and only you are in charge of your life and how you feel. Do not simply pretend to be something someone else wants you to be. If they do not like who you truly are, then they are no friend of yours. Challenge yourself to

always be genuine, and stop lying to yourself that there's such a thing as a wrong emotion. Life is too short to always be worrying about what everyone else thinks.