



What Masks of Masculinity Do You Wear?

Wearing masks can be fun. Pretend you're someone else, play a part, exaggerate, be scary or goofy. When you've had enough, you can take off the mask and return to you, maybe even a little sweaty and relieved.



Do you wear a mask for everyday? How about for special occasions? Are you aware of your masks?

But what if you couldn't take off the mask? (There's a great *Twilight Zone* episode dedicated to that nightmarish scenario.) Or what if you just forget that you have it on and go to work looking like the guy above.

This is how it is for many men. We have been given and have worn masks for so long that we've forgotten they're on. We may even have a sense we are burdened by something but are too afraid to take them off.

Masculine masks we put on that are caricatures of masculinity — strong/silent, aggressive, non-emotional, intellectual, sexual stud, to name a few — are not necessarily created out of thin air but are often over-emphasized and force-fed to us as boys. They may represent a true aspect of us but not nearly the whole picture.



Do you have scary masks, fun masks, pretty masks, safe masks, masks even you don't see?

We men have many masks inside and not displaying all of them can cause us to feel angry, anxious, depressed and addicted to outlets where the other masks can live and breathe. If we wear one mask too long, we can even approach breakdown territory (i.e. mid-life crisis).

Try This

Start relating to all the masks inside you; take some time and ask yourself:

- What mask do I tend to wear most and where did I get this particular mask?
- How is this mask serving and limiting me?
- What other masks am I drawn to? Where do I show these masks?

Feel free to share with me what you've come up with.

With you in mind and heart,

Ben



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Ben Ringler, MFT Psychotherapy
1808 B Fourth Street
Offices in Berkeley and San Francisco
Berkeley, CA 94708

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