



REMOVING THE MASK... AND INTRODUCING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF



THE
WARRIORS PATH ©

What is a Mask?

- A psychological mask is a metaphorical concept referring to the persona or facade that individuals present to the outside world. This mask can be used to hide one's true feelings, thoughts, or personality traits, often to fit in with societal expectations, avoid vulnerability, or protect oneself from judgment or criticism.
- People might wear psychological masks in different situations, such as at work, in social settings, or even with close friends and family.
- While it can be a useful coping mechanism, relying too heavily on a psychological mask can lead to feelings of disconnection or inauthenticity.



The Origin of Mask Wearing

- When our childhood needs for attachment, belonging, visibility, and connection are unmet, we often overcompensate for feelings of inadequacy. We start seeking acceptance, belonging, and connection from our surroundings, focusing externally and betraying our authentic selves to meet others' needs. This constant effort to fulfill others' expectations is driven by our desire for the attention, love, connection, and belonging we lack.
- Experiencing trauma can significantly affect our psychological development, making it difficult to feel comfortable being our true selves. To cope, we often mask the "invalidated child" within us by adopting a false identity that shifts based on our environment, the people around us, or our surroundings.
- The mask is rooted in a fear of rejection which is a wound resulting from being denied our attachment needs as children when we were simply being ourselves.



Disconnection from Self

- Being disconnected from ourselves is caused by past trauma (emotional pain)
- We disconnect to adapt to the pain and uncomfortableness we experience when we are simply being ourselves.
- The loss of connection to self is an adaptation to fear and pain. We adapt by avoiding self-awareness, avoiding looking inward and avoiding our emotions.
- We learn to sacrifice who we are for other people as we further attempt to get our emotional needs met.
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The Shadow Self

- The shadow-self is our disowned self, embodying the less desirable aspects of our personality. It represents the parts of us we no longer acknowledge as our own, including some of our inherent positive qualities.
- The shadow represents all the parts of the authentic self which we have betrayed.
- When we face shame, judgment, rejection, invalidation, or neglect for simply being ourselves, we start to disown parts of our identity, relegating them to the shadow.
- Everything we deny in ourselves becomes a part of our shadow-self.

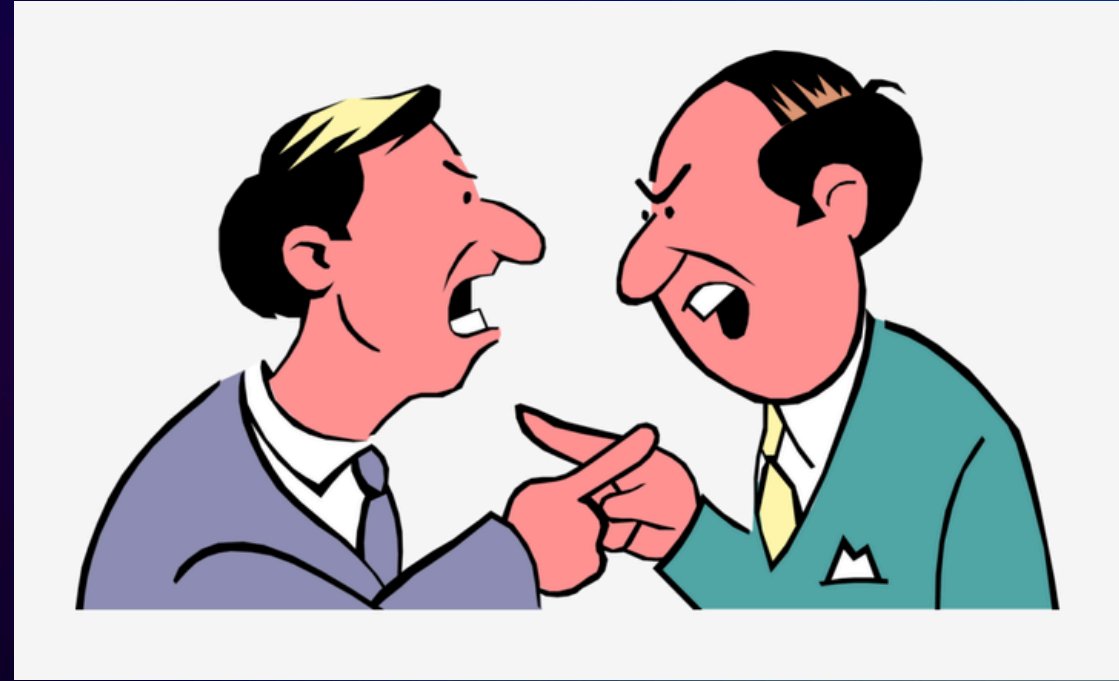


Psychological Projection

- Psychological projection is a defense mechanism where an individual's ego protects them from unconscious qualities by denying their existence and attributing them to others.
- Projection caused by an unconscious denial of parts of our shadow-self.
- Everything we deny in ourselves we judge in others.
- Judgement of others is caused by an unconscious judgement of self.
- "When someone is casting judgement, they are secretly revealing how they really feel about themselves"



“Someone’s behavior says everything about them, and nothing about me. But why their behavior triggers me has everything to do with me and nothing to do with them”.



Types of Masks



The Chameleon – Adapting to fit in wherever you go. Instead of standing up for your true beliefs, you become a follower, prioritizing acceptance and belonging over truth and honesty.



The People Pleaser – Always catering to others' desires and feeling responsible for their emotions. The people pleaser treads carefully, avoiding honesty and openness out of fear of conflict, abandonment, or rejection.



The Martyr – Prioritizing others' needs over your own to the extent that self-sacrifice becomes a lifestyle. You neglect your own need for love and care, ironically seeking appreciation, validation, or acceptance from others through your selflessness.



The "I'm Fine" Mask – Believing that your emotions are unimportant, invalid, or undeserving of discussion, acknowledgment, or processing. This mask seeks acceptance by downplaying your own emotional issues, ultimately prolonging and avoiding their resolution.



The Bravado Mask – A common mask individuals use to overcompensate for feelings of inadequacy, weakness, or inferiority in their surroundings. This mask is driven by a deep fear of vulnerability, which the person perceives as a sign of weakness



They Psychological Mask Helps Prevent...

- **Healing** –In order to heal we must be honest with ourselves and be authentic.
- **Genuine Connection** – When we overcompensate, we struggle to form real connections with others. This often results in having more acquaintances but fewer meaningful relationships.
- **Self-Acceptance** –When we are not aware or in touch with our shadow-self we are unable to love and accept ourselves
- **Honesty** – When we can't be honest with ourselves and others, our egos trap us in denial, anger, defensiveness, and judgment. Lying becomes a defense mechanism for our masked personalities. We use denial and evasion to avoid facing the truths about ourselves.
- **Ownership** –We cannot take ownership of our wrongs or fallibility.
- **Vulnerability** – When we are inauthentic, it prevents us from being vulnerable, which in turn hinders our ability to heal or improve our lives. As the saying goes,



Be Authentic

Authenticity – Embracing our shadow self and giving it the love and attention it deserves is the key to being authentic. Authenticity is freedom.

When we are genuine, transparent, and honest about who we are, we liberate ourselves from constant defensiveness and guardedness.

This shift allows us to focus less on others' opinions and more on honoring ourselves. We seek true connections, take responsibility in conflicts, accept others, and give our true selves the attention, affirmation, validation, appreciation, and recognition we've always deserved and longed for.



SELF-BETRAYAL AND LOYALTY TO THE PERPETRATOR

- **Embracing Our True Nature** – When we deny our true nature, we become disconnected from our inner child and fail to recognize the unmet needs from our early childhood. This disconnection prevents us from addressing and healing those deep-seated needs, keeping us from living a fully authentic and fulfilled life.
- **Self-Abandonment** – By denying our true nature, we end up abandoning, betraying, lying to, and abusing ourselves. This self-betrayal keeps us from living authentically and fulfilling our deepest needs.
- **Loyalty to the Perpetrator** – When we reject our inner child and true self, we unconsciously treat ourselves in ways we believe we deserve, often mirroring the treatment we received from those who harmed us. This psychological concept, known as "loyalty to the perpetrator," leads us to neglect and abuse our own emotional needs, perpetuating a cycle of self-harm and neglect.
- **Shame and Guilt** – Feelings of shame and guilt don't stem from relapse itself. Instead, they arise from not being there for yourself when you needed it most—an abandonment of the self that cannot be ignored. These emotions are not consequences of "using" or "relapse," but rather of dishonoring and abandoning your authentic self. Failing to invest in yourself is merely a repetition of past trauma.



**“Where There is Empathy, Shame
Struggles to Exsist”**



Ask Yourself...

- Self-Reflection Questions – What qualities or personality traits do I judge myself most harshly for?
- What is one trait I truly love about myself?
- What do I often judge in others?
- Who do I admire most in my life, and what specific traits do I admire in them?
- What qualities am I most critical of in my friends, family, or romantic partners?

