

Faces and Masks Exercise

Name: _____ Date: _____

We all have different faces (masks) that we present to others. These masks sometimes change depending on the person and/or the situation. The psychoanalyst Carl Jung called these masks the *persona*. *Persona* is Latin for “mask.” In ancient Rome actors often wore masks that portrayed the characters they were playing.

We all have characters, or masks, that we like to put on from time to time. For this exercise, we’re going to create a mask for the character of your own True Self.

To begin this exercise, meditate for a while on the nature and character of your own True Self. The True Self, for the purposes of this exercise, is the person you are if you are living up to your own highest aspirations for yourself.

When you have a good image of your own True Self in mind, answer the following questions before going on to the next page:

What is the nature of your True Self? Are you a lover, a warrior, a sage, a teacher, a trickster, a peacemaker, or something else? What word best describes who you are?

What are the elements of nature that might reflect the nature of your own True Self? Are you patient like a mountain? Strong like an oak? Wise like an owl? Playful like a coyote? What elements of nature best describe who you are?

How might these elements of nature assist you in finding your True Self? When you create your mask, how might you incorporate these elements into its design?

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CREATING YOUR MASK

Now that you have a good idea of which elements to incorporate into your mask, gather the materials to make it. Try to focus on natural materials as much as possible, using wood, feathers, twigs, leaves, leather, etc. Many Native American tribes used dried gourds for this purpose.

When you create your mask, hold the idea in mind that it is a representation of your True Self; the person you are in the process of becoming. As such, when finished the mask should tell your own story in such a way that anyone looking at it would have a good idea of who you are.

When you have finished constructing your mask, go on to the next section of this worksheet and answer the questions below. Do not attempt to answer these questions until you have completed your mask. It may help, when answering the questions below, to meditate or take a walk in the woods first.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 'TRUE SELF' MASK

Now that you have completed your mask, what did the exercise teach you about your own body and how you relate to it? Be as specific as possible when answering.

Now that you have completed your mask, what did the exercise teach you about the way you think about your True Self? Be as specific as possible when answering.

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Now that you have completed your mask, what did the exercise teach you about your passions? About what you really care about, and what gives your life meaning? Be as specific as possible when answering.

Now that you have completed your mask, what did the exercise teach you about your own spiritual development? Be as specific as possible when answering.

Imagine an archaeologist digs up your mask a thousand years in the future. What might this archaeologist conclude about the person who wore it? Would the mask be a good representation of who you are? Be as specific as possible when answering.
