

Week 16 Practice

This week, I challenge you to remove one of your masks. Gulp. (I know, this can feel really risky.) Each of us has more than one mask we wear. Most of us have many masks. This week, choose just one.

One of my masks is my smile. I believe people will give me candy—which is to say, love and affection and belonging—if I am happy, if I'm not a hassle, if I'm not a burden, if I don't ask for their time and attention and care. So, when I'm asked how I am doing, I put on a smile. For me, this goes beyond normal social etiquette. I have difficulty telling my closest friends that I'm suffering.

Our masks come in many forms—smiles, clothing, cosmetics, roles, and people pleasing, to name just a few.

Begin this week by identifying one or more of your masks. Complete this statement, *If I _____, then other people will approve of me and give me good things like _____*. Answer this statement in as many different ways as you can. Once you have identified one or more masks, choose one to remove. For instance, for me, that would involve calling up a friend, telling him how I am struggling with something in my life, and asking for a specific form of help. I get nervous just thinking about it. What masks are you afraid to remove?

Take it off, friend, and dare to believe you'll be given good things anyway.