

7.4 FACES AND MASKS EXERCISE

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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 your own True Self? Are you patient like a mountain? Strong like an oak? Wise like an owl? Playful like a coyote? What elements 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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Now that you have completed your mask, what did the exercise teach you about the way you think about your own true nature as manifested in your own True Self? Be as specific as possible when answering.

Now that you have completed your mask, what did the exercise teach you about your own sense of "perfection?" This sense of perfection is about what you really care about, and what gives your life meaning. In other words, it tells you how to become the perfect "you" and to live according to your own true nature, so 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? In other words, what did it tell you about your growing ability to connect to nature, to others, and to your own True Self? 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? If so, why? If not, why not? Be as specific as possible when answering.
