

A Direct Path to Ending Inner Conflict

OUR MASKS AND OUR INNOCENT MOTIVES



A Mask-Buster Meditation

By Shawn Mahshie

WHAT MASK ARE YOU WEARING TODAY?

Alert, Playful, Sad, Dark, Sweet, Vulnerable?

How do you project an identity that hides who you really are or how you really feel from others (and from yourself)? It's just what we do, until we have learned to question it.

When that programming falls away, what's left is as present, spontaneous, loving, and playful as these "Moxund" (Maltese/Miniature Dachshund) puppies that my daughter and I raised some years back.



When we take a gentle, compassionate second look, we see for ourselves that holding on to an identity is one of the greatest sources of pain and conflict in our lives.

- Shawn Mahshie

Are you caught up in your own image? If you aren't you'd be an unusual human. Even when we are alone, we are often engaged in a story of who we are—or who we should be.

In fact, for many of us may be that the only time we aren't engaged in seeing ourselves a certain way, and wanting others to see us that way too, is when we're sleeping...



All of us made innocent decisions early in life that we had to be or act a certain way to get what we needed and feel safe, free, and loved.

When we look more closely, we find that trying to maintain our current limited (or inflated) idea of who we feel we need to be is behind much of our energy drain, much of our heartache, and most of the issues in our relationships with ourselves, our bodies, others, and life itself.

It's just what we do, until we have learned to question that widely-accepted practice that our minds learn early. The simple model I teach helps you to see how the creation and holding of an identity is one of the greatest sources of pain and conflict. I love using these MOXUND (Maltese/Miniature Dachshund) puppies I used to raise as examples of what it means to just show up with no mask.

What "Story of You" Do You Feel You Have to Live Up to?

Our identities can change over time, or can stay with us for life if we don't question the need to hold on to them. Noticing the true dysfunction they create, and that they aren't actually saving us at all—they are actually the source of many problems—is the key.

Here are some examples of the mask you may be wearing:

"I'm the one you will want to love/be in a relationship/friendship with,"

"I'm the one you will want to do business with,"

"I'm the one who is being hurt by you,"



"I'm the one who is a perfect home-maker,"

Slow everything down and think really carefully about all the ways you have defined yourself and all the more subtle ways that you, society or family have defined the roles you need to play that you may not even be aware of.

"I'm the one who is a good mother, father, son, daughter, sister, child,"

"I'm the one who is being misunderstood, not seen, not loved,"

"I'm the one who is a man/woman,"

"I'm the one who knows what's really going on here,"

"I'm the one who is right,"

"I'm the one who has a fat body,"

"I'm the one who is not ever supposed to be fat,
or sick or in pain right now,"

"I'm the one who is always supposed to be spiritual,
always calm and accepting."

Whether it's comparing ourselves to these images and beating ourselves up, or trying to GET others to see us in a way that validates the identity we've inadvertently programmed ourselves to project, it's all very innocent.



Byron Katie helped me see that the endless search for LOVE, APPRECIATION, and APPROVAL is all based on preserving the identity we've come to believe will ensure our comfort, security, and pleasure, as well as the comfort, security, and pleasure of those we love. It's as innocent as this puppy, yet can be behind some incredibly cruel treatment of ourselves and others. I would go so far as to say it's behind most wars -- whether among countries or spouses or family or friends.

And it gets really tricky when those of us CHANGEMAKERS who wish to serve have the "I'm the one who can help" identity. This makes others "The ones who need my help." Sometimes that's true and lovely and other times our ego (identity) starts to run the show--so that others' true needs and preferences are seen only through that projection.



NO NEED TO FEAR!

While most of us can't go through life yet being as present and identity-free as puppies or babies (my favorite role models), we can go a LONG way toward seeing how the motives driving the projection and protection of these images of ourselves are usually at the root of our pain -- not anything outside us.

My feelings about life and what I'm doing shift IMMEDIATELY when I work both the blame and shame angle of The Self-Solidarity™ Solution on the concepts behind my own and others' behaviors that I don't like. The Work (TW) helps me to spot the identities that certain behaviors are trying to maintain; The Wheel of Self-Love (WOSL) helps me identify the innocent motives beneath those identities.

In a fairly short time with this work, it begins to look like this: One of my clients suddenly dropped defending, and found everything changed when she became curious and open about how her husband saw her. As she stopped needing him to validate her identity, he finally felt safe to tell her what was bothering him. She no longer needs to be right and protect the image her child-mind had decided long ago she must present in order to be loved.



Talk about diffusing a war! Their marriage is a much happier place now. It's amazing what can shift when we let go of our identity.

I recently did TW with a client who felt alienated from others in his business. We worked, "The culture is destroying everything beautiful." He saw how holding himself outside that careless culture (to maintain his identity as the guy who has the answers and is devoted to the environment) kept him from seeing how HE was destroying everything beautiful inside himself in that moment, particularly his perception of others and therefore his ability to do business with them.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Questioning the thought that I have to present "this" identity means I don't feel so anxious about creating this little book. I spotted how I was motive-driven, believing you have to like me and this e-book to arrive at some outcome my mind decided was "best." I realize this e-book feels like pure love to me, and found that I don't need anyone to see it any certain way to experience that. So there is no fear or risk in sending it.

THE MASKS AND THE MOTIVES

A Mask-Buster Meditation/Cheatsheet

Sometimes dropping the masks & connecting deeply to ourselves & others is just a matter of taking a moment to notice what we are trying to project or protect. And rather than being disgusted with ourselves about that, to notice the sweet "kindergarten" motives driving it all. This little meditation can become a short path to dissolving those old masks that no longer serve.

- ◆ Stop to notice what you're telling yourself about how you are supposed to look or act or be in a given situation. Notice how it is DIFFERENT from the way you might naturally show up.
- ◆ Notice how it feels in your body when your inner critic compares who/what are in any given moment with who/what it says you should be.
- ◆ Notice your innocent motives.... What do you want? How has your mind matched up this outcome with you needing to be a certain way in the world to get that outcome? Is that true?
- ◆ Take a moment to really observe how that specific definition of self does not accomplish what your mind thought it could; it just accomplishes separation from yourself & others.
- ◆ Notice what actually does happen and how you feel when you separate from dear you, honestly believing a particular version of you would be better.
- ◆ Let mind see for itself that having a preconceived notion how to be or act or look does NOT ensure that you will be safe, loved, or happy. In fact it takes those things away.

- ◆ Notice the ways you want people to see you. What would stop you from seeing yourself that way. Maskless. Just as you are?
- ◆ What would it feel like to go through life in complete solidarity with yourself? To have your own unconditional acceptance? To no longer base your “enoughness” on your own mind-made standard or on what others think of you?
- ◆ Notice what it is you really want from others or life that creates the innocent motive behind the mask. Give it to yourself. Just as you are.
- ◆ Feel the freedom and relaxation of seeing that mind can't really know how you should show up, other than how you DO show up. It's off the hook!
- ◆ Move into solidarity with YOU, standing with, by, and for each moment of YOU that shows up... just as you are.
- ◆ When you can, do a full-blown process doing The Work on how someone isn't seeing you the way you want to be seen. Or use The Wheel of Self-Love when your story of who you're supposed to be has you wishing you had said or done things differently.

Once you have questioned the story that says you should be different than you are, you can move into being the curious loving observer of this incarnation of energy we call YOU.

Ask yourself, as you are going through life and watching the masks, and the motives behind them:

- ◆ Who do I feel I have to be now to be accepted or loved (by myself or others)?
- ◆ What stereotypes go with being a man or a woman or a parent or a co-worker or a friend or a human that are keeping me from listening to my own tenderest part?
- ◆ What story of "Who I need to be" leaves me afraid to take this particular risk in my business or my relationship?

With these simple steps, you can become aware of the true consequences to you and others of the programming you picked up along the way that has you blindly believing that certain ways of being in the world are more worthy than other ways.

You can finally feel the sweetness of returning to who you are and how you are in each moment, NO MATTER HOW you show up, with no more judgment on yourself than these puppies have



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AUTHOR

I'm SO excited as we discover the connectedness and joy and fun and faith in all that is behind the masks we all wear, as we question our stories together!!

:-) Shawn

P.S. We do an entire module on IDENTITY AND APPEARANCES in the Aligned Action Adventure Manifestation Mastermind. [CLICK HERE](#) to be added to the wait list and we will reach out to you during our next enrollment for that year-long program.



P.P.S. Here's one of my favorite identities: Being a Certified Facilitator of The Work of Byron Katie. And yet despite what I tell myself, my clients love what they get in my private and group work with me, and don't really seem to care about the certification itself. The process is what got me where I am, not the seal.

Katie points out that the certification program helps us spot what we're attaching to (including the identity of being certified!). Once I let go of needing it and trusted what I had to offer, it came easily! (And now they are no longer certifying facilitators, so my mind developed a new identity of being among the few in the world! Just watch what mind does and how it innocently tries to ensure your survival by validating or invalidating who you are in any given moment). Adorable. :-)