

## STEP FOUR: TELL THE TRUTH

Have you ever come across the type of person that you felt you just couldn't trust for some reason? You didn't know exactly what it was, but he just wasn't on the level. Or how about the type of person who always has a story, it's just not a story you believe. Most of us have come across those types – they're easy to spot because they're obvious. The truth is, though, we all have some “masking” in us.

As we were growing up and forming our ideas about how to act safely in this world, we all began to wear masks in varying degrees. We say and do the socially acceptable things, and we defer to people in authority over us, no matter what our age. We've been doing it for so long and it's so automatic, that many of us have no idea what we really think or feel. We do it because we don't want to be rejected by others and because we're not so sure about ourselves to begin with.

These masks keep us safe. They also imprison us. All of our “shoulds” and “have to's” and “ought to's” obscure who we really are. Some people are afraid of repercussions if they decide to be more authentically themselves. But authenticity is not a license to be boorish, and most people know that, so fear of repercussions is invalid. A few people may be threatened by your authenticity in and of itself, but more people will probably welcome it, and studies have shown that the more authentic you are, the more authentic people you attract.

The more people trust themselves and are comfortable with themselves, the more authentic they become in what they say and in their behavior. The more people give up their masks, the more they can explore and celebrate their

real self. This releases all the energy that went into maintaining their masks so that it can be put into celebrating their lives.

Do a little investigating into what you think and feel. Is it authentic? Is it working well for you? Is it time to replace those old thoughts and feelings with more honest ones, ones that truly represent who you really are.

We are all continuously changing and growing. Choose the beliefs, feelings, and values that are real for you now. You will become freer, more alive, and ultimately happier.