

## THE MASKS HAVE TO GO WRITING WORKSHOP (80 min)

### IRVANA Spiritual Retreat 2011

(FOR FACILITATORS' REFERENCE/PREPARATION) **Materials to bring:** 70 spiral notebooks, 70 pens, big pad of paper, easel, marker, ground rule handouts (2 per table), sheets of each question for small group tables (2 per table)

Objectives (for FACILITATORS' REFERENCE):

- Get people thinking about the masks we wear, what are behind those masks, what life would be like without those walls we build, and the action we can take to take off those masks.
- Give members a self-made roadmap on actions we can take to remove the masks we hide behind, let our true selves shine through and be the people we are meant to be.
- Interact with others and feel like workshop attendees have participated.

NOTE for facilitators: During the writing sessions, go around to each group and make sure participants understand the questions and give examples if need be (if you can't think of any good examples, ask someone in that small group to share some examples to the others). As people are writing on each question, let them know when they only have 1-2 minutes left before moving on.

#### Workshop Format:

- I. (FACILITATOR 1): Introduction (10 minutes)
  - a. Introduce ourselves (FACILITATOR 1 AND FACILITATOR 2)
  - b. (FACILITATOR 1): This workshop will be about examining the masks we wear and hide behind, our true nature we can be afraid to reveal, steps to take to be our true selves and practice humility.
  - c. We will be discussing, writing and sharing throughout the workshop
  - d. Ask everyone else to introduce themselves and where they are from (Area &/or town)
  - e. Number off into small groups (5-8 per group) and regroup at new tables
  - f. Read aloud to the large group the following from pg. 33, Basic Text (out of Ch. 4 How It Works-Step 5): **“Addicts tend to live secret lives. For many years, we covered low self-esteem by hiding behind phony images that we hoped would fool people. Unfortunately, we fooled ourselves more than anyone. Although we often appeared attractive and confident on the outside, we were really hiding a shaky, insecure person on the inside. The masks have to go.”**
  - g. Pass out spiral notebooks and pens
- II. (FACILITATOR 1): Large group brainstorm (5 min)
  - a. Ask the large group, “What masks do people wear?” Elaborate on this question if people are having a hard time thinking of things, ex: false pride, arrogance, “everything’s fine”, looking good on the outside, etc.
  - b. Get a few answers and (facilitator 2 writes) write them on the large pad to get examples of masks people wear.
- III. (FACILITATOR 1): In small groups: (25 min)
  - a. Ask participants to take about 10 minutes and individually write about “What masks are YOU wearing?” (10 min)-hand out question on small paper (2 to each table)
  - b. Ask them to discuss as a small group “What are people hiding behind these masks?” (5 min)

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- c. Ask them to individually write on “What are behind the masks YOU are wearing?”. (10 min)  
-hand out question on small paper (2 to each table)
- IV. (FACILITATOR 2): In small groups: (25 min)
  - a. Read aloud to the large group the following paragraph from the Basic Text, (Ch. 7 Recovery and Relapse), page 83: **“We come here powerless, and the power that we seek comes to us through other people in Narcotics Anonymous, but we must reach out for it. Now clean and in the Fellowship, we need to keep ourselves surrounded by others who know us well. We need each other. Narcotics Anonymous is a Fellowship of survival, and one of its advantages is that it places us in intimate, regular contact with the very people who can best understand and help us in our recovery. Good ideas and good intentions do not help if we fail to put them into action. Reaching out is the beginning of the struggle that will set us free. It will break down the walls that imprison us. A symptom of our disease is alienation, and honest sharing will free us to recover.”** (3 min)
  - b. Ask participants to individually write on “What would YOUR life look like without the masks?”. (10 min) -hand out question on small paper (2 to each table)
  - c. Read aloud to the large group the following paragraph from the Basic Text, (Ch. 5 What Can I Do), page 55: **“We have learned that old ideas and old ways won’t help us to stay clean or to live a better life. If we allow ourselves to stagnate and cling to terminal hipness and fatal cool, we are giving into the symptoms of our disease. One of the problems is that we found it easier to change our perception of reality than to change reality. We must give up this old concept and face the fact that reality and life go on, whether we choose to accept them or not. We can only change the way we react and the way we see ourselves. This is necessary for us to accept that change is gradual and recovery is an ongoing process.”** (2 min)
  - d. Ask participants to individually write on “What are some steps you can take to move towards those goals of revealing our true selves?” (10 min) -hand out question on small paper (2 to each table)
- V. (Facilitator 1): In large group wrap-up –all groups share ideas, thoughts, experiences (10-15 min)
  - a. Ask for people to share some of the steps we can take to move towards revealing our true selves and practicing humility (what they just wrote on) (facilitator 2 writes on pad)
  - b. Close with prayer

**WHAT MASKS ARE YOU WEARING?**

**WHAT ARE YOU HIDING BEHIND THOSE MASKS?**

**WHAT WOULD YOUR LIFE LOOK LIKE WITHOUT THE MASKS?**

**WHAT ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MOVE TOWARDS THAT VISION (OF LIFE WITHOUT MASKS)?**