

# The High Point P k

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Since October is the month when many think of Halloween we thought it would be the perfect time for us all to be willing to be courageous and to discover what masks we wear everyday of the year. Are we being true to our authentic selves, the self which doesn't have to hide behind, beneath or below? It's a good question, well worth reflection. Looking at our beliefs may be the first step into recognizing what mask we may be putting on.

I wear a mask to hide the person I pretend to be. -Atticus



*Take off your anger mask and feel the fear.  
Unmask the fear and find your true self which is love.*



## Are Your Beliefs True or Helpful?

Sometimes our beliefs can give us identities and attitudes that aren't true or helpful. SMART Recovery stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training and its aim is to help empower you to live with more motivation for the changes you want in your life; to cope with your urges; manage your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; as well as have a more balanced life so you don't relapse. Our thinking can at times be irrational and not based in reality because we're human and struggle occasionally. SMART teaches us to examine our thoughts and beliefs and to dispute them by asking

- 1) Where is the evidence that my belief is true?
- 2) Is my belief helpful or unhelpful?

Our beliefs influence how we feel and then consequently, how we behave. For example, if I believe that I *always* fail and can do *nothing* right then I will likely feel defeated, angry, hopeless, and sad. If I have all of these negative emotions, I am likely to not have the energy to accomplish my goals or see my self-worth and will not have the balance it takes to make good decisions. However, if I challenge the belief by asking:

- 1) Where is the evidence that I *always* fail and can do *nothing* right?  
Hopefully I will be able to see that I have done some useful things in the past, so only and won't always fail. With this new effective belief, I can see that I'm not a failure, but a person who fails at times. That can be uncomfortable, but I can cope with the discomfort and choose to learn and grow. The belief that I always fail is not true.
- 2) Is this belief helpful? (Another way to ask the second question is to ask what good and bad can happen to me if I keep my belief?)

Check out this other example from <https://www.smartrecovery.org/three-minute-rebt-do-you-need-what-you-want/>

**Belief:** I must have what I want.

**Dispute:** Is there any evidence that my belief is true?

**Rational Response:** I can't find any. I want what I want, but there is no evidence that I have to have it.

**Dispute:** What good can happen to me if I give up my belief?

**Rational Response:** I can feel free to have desire without disturbance. I am more likely get what I want because I am not desperate, anxious, and depressed. I am less likely to demand that others give me what I want, thereby being less troublesome and dependent. I can be happier.

Join us any Tuesday at 4pm for SMART Recovery in High Point's Group Room. Good luck as you begin paying attention to your beliefs and disputing them to see if they are true or helpful to who you want to be.

Written by: **Emily Hand, MA, NCC**



**October is a month of ghosts and goblins and Halloween fun at High Point Clinic. If you dare to visit us on Thursday, October 31. you might be allowed to walk the Yellow Brick Road with your favorite Wizard of Oz characters. We may even have some special treat (or tricks) just for YOU!**

"HOME IS A PLACE WE ALL MUST FIND, CHILD.  
IT'S NOT JUST A PLACE WHERE YOU EAT OR SLEEP.  
HOME IS KNOWING. KNOWING YOUR MIND, KNOWING YOUR HEART, KNOWING YOUR COURAGE.  
IF WE KNOW OURSELVES, WE ARE ALWAYS HOME ANYWHERE."  
*Glinda, the good witch*



Can you guess who Dorothy will be?? What about the Wicked Witch?

**Which Mask are YOU Wearing?**

If you like this newsletter then Rene' had a little to do with it...





*Masquerade! Paper faces on parade. Masquerade! Hide your face so the world will never find you. Masquerade! Every face a different shade. Masquerade! Look around, there's another mask behind you. (Phantom of the Opera)*

Masks—they come in all shapes and sizes. Some create an illusion of safety, some create secrecy, some create danger, some create fear, some create glamour. There are an infinite number of beautiful and terrible personas we can create for ourselves with masks. Some masks we purposely choose to wear, others are forced on us by circumstances we can't control. However, we all must learn how to live past those masks and be truly ourselves or life becomes a sad ordeal and we will never be free. I have spent my whole life struggling to learn who I am without the masks and how to be true to myself regardless of what others think. It's a long and difficult road, but one so well worth the effort.

I think that a lot of you know that my dad was a pastor. I bet that even as you read those words "pastor's kid," you pictured a certain type of person. Everyone knows what pastors' kids are like! Holy terrors—usually the worst kids around. Of course, I was completely different. I was a perfect, angel child—it was my siblings who upheld the stereotypical PK persona. However, that was a mask I was born into. I didn't *choose* to be a PK, I just *was* a PK. I grew up with everyone around me having a preconceived idea of how I was to behave, what my values were, and how I was to treat others.

Not only was my father a pastor, but he also was a public speaker/teacher. Over the years we traveled the country and spent countless summer vacations at various Bible camps from Maine to California where he was speaking. There was a time in my life when I could have run into any number of churches, camps, and even colleges and shouted, "My father is Vic Walter!" and tons of people would have immediately known who he was and therefore would have assumed they knew what kind of a person I was—another mask forced on me by life.

I also wore masks of my own choosing. One mask that I wore for a long time was that of a shy person. I chose that mask because it let me hide in quietness, solitude, and hopefully, out of the spotlight. I know you will not believe it, but I was six-foot tall in high school. As you can imagine, this created a situation where I was teased all the time, it was relentless. My goal in high school was to blend into the walls and be able to walk between classes and have no one notice me. I would hide behind my shy mask and not look people in the eyes, speak with anyone, or draw attention to myself in any way.

Those are just two of the masks that are a part of my life. There are many others. However, when I was a freshman in high school, I spent the summer working at a Bible camp. I went for three months and lived and worked there. That is the first time I can remember thinking, "No one really knows me here. I can be anybody I want to be—I can be different than I am normally!" For me that was life changing! It was the first step along my life that I was trying to take as me—not as who people thought I should be. It was such a freeing concept! I have spent the years since then trying to understand who me is and trying to be me—true to myself, peeling the masks off and living past them. It's scary to do that! It takes courage and hard work. Some days I don't succeed, and I must go back and reassess my decisions.

If I could have one wish, I think it would be that each one of you could find the courage to live true to who you really are. That's easy to say, but how to do it? I'm sure the process is different for everyone, but for me it means spending time by myself. I must think about the things I truly like and dislike. What things make me excited, or happy? What things am I passionate about? When I can spend time just meditating on those things, I'm connecting with my true self. Once I have my sights on what I really think, feel, believe; I look at how I'm living my life. Where am I doing or acting in a way that doesn't agree with how I truly feel/am? Once I decide where I'm not in alignment, I can admit that those are masks I'm using to cover up, hide, or be left alone. The next step is to spend some time pondering if I'm willing to take any consequences that might come from my living true to myself. Once the answer is yes, I must actively work changing my actions to match my self-discoveries. That's not easy either. It means taking a risk and deciding that I have the strength to put myself back together again if everything goes crazy because things will go crazy.

I would urge you to take a chance on yourself! You deserve to be vulnerable to the world around you and let's face it—the world is full of mean people who will try to tear you down and walk on you in less than half a heartbeat. I have found however, that it is the very fact that I know who I am and that I am working on being transparent which creates a shield for me that is far stronger than any wall I ever built with masks. It brings such inner peace and comfort that it protects me from 90% of the meanness directed towards me. I don't have to worry if others don't value me—I value myself. I truly hope that each of you can find the courage to admit to yourself that "you" is beautiful and the things you think need to be secrets can become a part of being free—good or bad, release them and live past them. Step out and find the freedom pulling the masks off can give you.



From the life of and written by  
High Point's Larae Thompson