

# uPLifted Series

An Informational Digest of EmpowerM3 by Coach Cindy



## ADHD Un-Masking

BY: CINDY NORTH, ACC, CALC, CERTIFIED PQ COACH™

Novmeber 1, 2023

Living life is simply different with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, shortened to ADHD and sometimes still referred to as ADD. In fact, life is not "simply different" at all. The name itself is complicated and misconceived, not to mention the struggles that come along with a differently wired brain. And so, the masks form to cover up what is not acceptable in a neurotypical world.

ADHD masking can become a debilitating coping mechanism in which ADHDers camouflage and use strategies to compensate in an attempt to hide ADHD symptoms. Masking occurs to fit in where standing out is not acceptable. Rather than experience the fallout from misfired executive functioning, inattentive, hyperactive, or impulsive behavior, ADHDers often develop a mask to cover up what is happening inside to combat judgment from others. Judgment can be high, with costly reprimands, failing grades, missed appointments, school suspensions, overdue assignments, lost jobs, unmet tasks, broken relationships, low self-worth, and more. Who wouldn't want to hide?

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*A mask goes up to cover up!*



## Three Key Areas of Masking

**Social Masking** This mask becomes like wearing chameleon skin. Rarely can you be true to yourself as you constantly try to "act" in a socially acceptable way.

**Academic or Work Masking** This mask is like pulling out an ADHD Swiss Army Knife of tactics for survival. Performance requires extra effort for symptoms that complicate critical executive functions like attention, focus, time management, organization, and working memory to succeed.

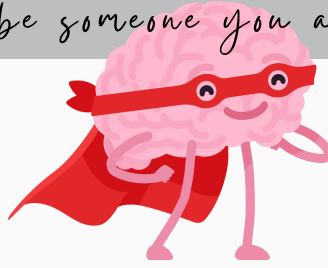
**Emotional Masking** This mask is often worn to hide unacceptable emotional reactions. Often, ADHDers will suppress their emotions in an attempt to avoid conflict and fall out from feeling emotions in a big way.

Trying to live life masking ADHD becomes exhausting. ADHD masking may contribute to increased stress and anxiety and can lead to depression. Individuals may delay accurate diagnosis and prevent successful treatment by masking symptoms. Living fully with ADHD in wellness seems out of reach and beyond capability. Masks are developed in an attempt to not be "that" person.



**Curious Question:** How is the mask you are using attempting to make you worthy?

*"It's much more interesting to embrace who you really are rather than waste time pretending to be someone you are not." - Adam Levine*



But "that" person is who you are designed to be. You are uniquely different, offering the world different assets. With an ADHD brain style comes strengths that neurotypical minds do not have ready access to or have at all. Masks are not all downside. Through the development of masks, ADHDers are building resilience, problem-solving skills, and coping to fit the needs before them. It's not so bad when the payoff equals the effort. Unfortunately, more often than not, the effort far exceeds even the most basic requirements over time and is notwithstanding.

ADHD masking and developing coping strategies are not the same. ADHD masking adapts behavior to conceal or hide symptoms, whereas developing coping strategies intentionally strategize ways to cope with symptoms to enhance living fully from strength. Some will argue that ADHD masking is 100% detrimental. Others will tell you ADHD masking is essential if you want to be accepted and embraced by the neurotypical world. What is true for you is best determined by you. There may be times when masking is beneficial and socially polite. Other times, you may find ease in not letting social pressures dictate how you care about what others think of how your brain works or doesn't.



## ADHD Masking and How to Be Your Authentic Self

[ADHD SOS!](#)

In this episode you'll learn:

- What masking is and why ADHDers do it.
- 2 questions that will help you uncover the unconscious ways you may be masking.
- The ways masking can be damaging in subtle and invisible ways.
- 3 easy and practical ways to step into your authentic self.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/adhd-sos/id1648965549?i=1000583842419>

*When you hide yourself you don't get to be yourself.*

Masking cannot be the only way of trying to live with ADHD. The first step is taking notice when masking is not working or serving you fully. Self-awareness can be weaker for the ADHD brain when externally stimulated. Choosing to accept your ADHD brain requires self-reflection and adaptation. Learning what adaptations work for you will take you further without all the effort. Tapping into habits, routines, and self-care can be a life-changer. Getting to the heart of your ADHD and understanding your unique ADHD wiring may require help from an outside source.

Finding support is critical, especially when you feel like you are spiraling out of control despite the extensive efforts trying to blend in.

### **How to Improve ADHD Living**

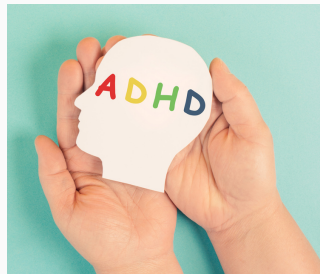
- Explore medication options with an ADHD-informed prescribing medical professional.
- Increase movement/exercise to stimulate natural neurochemicals that improve mood and performance.
- Eat to Fuel the brain, not to cope with emotions.
- Prioritize sleep so the brain has time to sort, filter, repair, and recharge.
- Seek Cognitive Behavior Therapy with an experienced ADHD Therapist.
- Partner with a Certified ADHD Life Coach to work with your brain wiring.
- Practice Mindfulness Techniques daily to strengthen self-awareness as access to redirecting thoughts.
- Externalize thoughts through journaling.
- Reflect from the eye of a "friend." Is this mask serving me?
- Give an 'Effing Less- Challenge your thoughts about what others think?
- Employ perspective shifts through reframing techniques
- Identify strengths and use them often.
- Create your personal owner's manual for the way your brain is wired.  
You know what you know. What else is there?



*Be the person that you are proud to be.*

This list may sound doable and probably ideas you have heard before. You will likely need to add your spin to make them stick so they can serve you best. All that said, improving daily living without wearing masks to cover up ADHD challenges can be difficult if your inner critics are left running your show.

Self-sabotaging thought patterns and behaviors related to ADHD masking remain firmly embedded in everyday thinking if they go unnoticed. Learning how your thinking patterns affect your daily living and accessing a different thought opportunity is a game-changer. The Positive Intelligence® framework helps people move from saboteur thinking to a more sageful view by activating the brain through self-command. By activating awareness through mental fitness practices, you can better manage saboteur thinking habits and find ways to live healthier and more joyful without masks.



ADHD masking is both beneficial and detrimental! Striking a balance is crucial. Isn't balance is what we are all looking for? Living with more authenticity than dressed up to be what you are not. You are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. You are not broken or unfixable, nor are you to be fixed. Working with your brain to design your life in a way that best suits you is paramount. Let yourself shine bright in the likeness of your whole "self" as you aim to be. You are wired differently to offer your greatness. How can you design your way of being in the likeness of who you are and what you are capable of to let the world see you unmasked?



**Curious Question:** What can you commit to from the list above to support yourself?



# Hello

Thank you for joining me. My name is Cynthia North, but people know me as Cindy. I am ACC Certified Life Coach with the ICF as a Certified ADHD Life Coach (CALC) and Certified PQ Coach™ (CPQC) with Positive Intelligence® devoted to partnering with clients to create self-success within ADHD and living life. I work with all ages having a special interest in how the brain affects the outcome. I help ADHDers and stuck people move from crippled in doubt to capable with clarity. I have expanded to offer personalized Mental Fitness Coaching through Shirzad Chamine's Positive Intelligence® Program. New possibilities bloom with deeper self-awareness and through the strength in your mental fitness. I have an innate desire to empower others no matter what difficulties they face with or without ADHD. I believe everyone is worthy of stepping forward out of stuck.

ADHD has touched me personally and professionally.

I know first-hand how ADHD symptoms and behavior can wreak havoc on family dynamics, school, and work success. I chose to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach as well as a member of Positive Intelligence® as a PQ Coach™ because I want others to discover their greatness within ADHD strengths while working with their executive functioning challenges through a positive mindset. I am where I am today because of my two dynamic ADHD children. They both teach me and open my mind to more each day. Their needs were beyond a hug, discipline, structure, or praise. So, I sought professional help, ultimately finding a trained ADHD Life Coach. And here I am serving people who want different and deserve ease and flow.

Life experiences have made way for opportunity. I am on a journey to slay stigmas surrounding brain differences. Finding a Life Coach to empower my child led me to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach myself to serve others past their stuck ways and ADHD stigmas. Choosing to strengthen your inner self is where Empower M3 starts. The work is an inside job where your "M3" begins. Connecting your heart and brain with a Coach creates empowerment opportunities. EmpowerM3 - is where the 3 connect to take flight.



There is a more extraordinary tomorrow when your discovery starts today.

ADHD is not  
something you  
outgrow. ADHD  
is something  
you grow with.

— CINDY NORTH,  
LIFE COACH AND AUTHOR



What do you know now?

## Notes & Takeaways



### Disclaimer:

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