

Masking at Work: A Self-Audit

Not a diagnostic tool. A space to notice patterns.



What does masking feel like for you?

Tick any that apply:

- I feel like I'm "on" at work, even when I'm exhausted.
- I rehearse what I say before I speak, sometimes even casual things.
- I match the tone or pace of others, even when it feels unnatural.
- I avoid speaking up unless I'm 100% sure I'll sound clear.
- I feel emotionally drained after small social interactions.
- I pretend to understand things when I don't, to avoid judgment.

Is it habit, safety, or both?

Reflect and tick if relevant:

- I was praised for being calm, capable, or easygoing, even when I was struggling.
- I've been told I'm "professional" when I'm actually masking distress.
- I've hidden overwhelm or burnout to protect my job or reputation.
- I keep my tone or facial expressions neutral, even when upset.
- I feel pressure to hide sensory needs, stimming, or fidgeting.
- I mask even when it's not "necessary" it just feels automatic.

What's it costing me?

- I spend energy on appearing fine instead of asking for help.
- I've delayed diagnosis, support, or accommodations out of fear.
- I feel disconnected from who I really am at work.
- I've burnt out multiple times without understanding why.
- I get praised for being "so capable" but it feels hollow.
- I don't know how to *not* mask anymore.



Gentle Unmasking

- I could try saying “Let me get back to you” instead of masking confusion.
- I might let myself stim or fidget discreetly, without shame.
- I could write more and speak less if that feels easier.
- I might reduce unnecessary meetings to preserve energy.
- I want to practice being more myself, at least with safe people.
- I’m allowed to keep masking for safety, and still be self-aware.

Reflection Questions

What does masking protect me from?

What part of myself feels hidden at work?

What might one small unmasking moment look like?

This is a reflective tool, not a diagnostic one. Everyone’s masking experience is different.



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