



**Ottawa Integrative Health Centre Inc.**

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New satellite office inside The Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre - 2260 Walkley Rd. Ottawa

## Helping You Achieve Health . . . Naturally!

September 2014

### **Hiding behind the masks we wear**

By Gina Landgraff  
Canadian Certified Counsellor

“It’s not what you look at that matters. It’s what you see.” - Henry David Thoreau



In the wake of Robin Williams’ passing we realize that what we see isn’t always the truth. What we want to portray to the world, and what is going on inside are often two different situations, which lead us to putting on a facade. Focusing much of our mental energy trying to be something or someone that we are not. Trying to find approval, confidence, or happiness from other people, or materialistic things.

Everybody at some point in their life has worn a metaphorical mask. It is inevitable. These masks are a way of protecting ourselves from anticipated criticism, perceived danger, or due to our own insecurities. There are many different masks that exist within our society: the “perfectionist”, the “party animal”, the “know-it-all”, and the list goes on. If you have ever seen the smiling customer service employee being yelled at by a dissatisfied customer, you have seen somebody wearing a “mask”.

There is a purpose, and sometimes a need to portray something different than the genuine

feelings that are occurring in the moment. But what are the physical, mental, and emotional costs associated with wearing a mask? What past experiences have you encountered that have determined your mask to be the best defensive choice? If you have been criticized for a certain tendency, you may begin to try to cover that up in the presence of people you don’t know very well, or don’t feel comfortable with.

If you’ve ever felt exhausted after a day at work, or a night of entertaining friends this could be a result from constantly being “on”. But at the end of the day, when you are spending time with your closest friends and family, are you able to take that mask off? It is not uncommon to become lost in the facade we portray to the outside world. Some individuals may not even realize they are wearing a mask, because it has become a core part of their identity.

Emotions are one of the most common factors that are “masked” on a day to day basis. Just because I say this tendency is common, does not mean I am implying it is healthy. Being unable to say “No” due to fear of disappointing somebody, hurting feelings, or being disliked is an emotionally costly habit to take on. Some other emotions commonly masked are; sadness, anxiety, embarrassment, fear, and a big one, anger.

In many cultures, including our Canadian culture, an important value we hold is to always be nice and polite to others. This provides the message that communicating anger is wrong, and must be avoided. Therefore we learn to bite our tongues when upset, deny that anything is wrong, and stuff our feelings down. The irony is that when we try to push our genuine emotions away, they push back even harder. Unexpressed

angry results in resentment, hostility, increased stress, and strained relationships. When wearing a mask in the workplace this can cause job dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, emotional and physical exhaustion.

A significant part of my practice is working with clients on how to be assertive in a way that feels empowering but still respectful of the other individual. The first step is recognizing which masks you wear, and in what situations. If you can identify the masks that you can let go of, you are on the track to living a more authentic life. Embrace who you are, the vulnerabilities, the imperfections, and your individual quirks. Seeking out approval from others always leads to a dead end. Begin to recognize the insecurities we have come from within, and therefore can not be fixed by those around us.

**“The best of the summer gone and the new fall not yet born. The odd uneven time.”** ~ Sylvia Path  
Artical By Jo-Ann D’Alfonso, RYT  
Yoga Educator/Therapist

Although there could be sadness about letting go of the summer there is that slight upward energy about autumn. For me when autumn comes I get excited about all the new that is coming. The fresh air that gives me a lift in my step, the upward energy that invigorates me in preparation for my fall programming and the color of the leaves that open my mind to all the beauty around me. I feel so blessed to live here in the Ottawa region where we can experience all four seasons. I love change! I know that change can be a challenge to many, and it takes reel awareness to allow for change to happen slowly and softly and let ourselves adapt to the change. A quote from a deeply

# UpComing

## **Sleeplessness, Stress and Burnout Oh My!**

*Naturopathic Options for the New Mom  
Presentation by Naturopathic Doctor  
Christine Nguyen*

**Thursday, Oct 9 from 2-3pm**

*Moms, dads, kids/infants are all welcome!*

*Ontario Early Years Centre*

*Nepean-Carlton*

*1099 Longfields Drive, Nepean*

**To register: Call Melanie Dupuis**

**@ 613-825-5990**

## **Fall Yoga events**

### **September:**

*12 week yoga session*

*\$162.00 (10% off when joining both days)*

**Stretch and Relax: Monday**

**September 15, 6:30pm – 7:30pm**

**Beyond the Basics Thursday**

**September 18, 10:30 – 11:30am**

*Min. 3 participants pre-registered required*

### **October:**

*5 week meditation series*

*Learning 5 different meditations to  
facilitate and demystify the practice  
of meditation*

**Starting October 2, 2014**

**Thursday 6-7pm \$70.00**

### **November:**

*Moving beyond pain*

*Learn 5 tools that will move you beyond  
the draining energy of pain*

**Saturday November 8,**

**12-3pm \$45.00**

### **December:**

*Balancing moods*

*How not to let changing moods  
dictate our daily lives*

**Saturday Dec. 6, 2014**

**12-3pm \$45.00**

*Self-Inquiry yoga*

beloved teacher, BKS Iyengar who has just passed at the age of 96, that reminds me of the blessings of change in my life:

***“Change is not something that we should fear. Rather, it is something that we should welcome. For without change, nothing in this world would ever grow or blossom and no one in this world would ever move forward to become the person they’re meant to be.” ~B.K.S. Iyengar.***

Of course this saying can apply to every day experience but at this time I can easily apply it to the change in season and take this time to bring me back in my intention towards balance when I may have burned a bit too much fire with very busy weekends, more activities than normal and extreme temperatures. I appreciate recommitting to a more structured schedule and taking advantage of seasonal food for a gentle cleanse known as Pnachakarma in the Ayurvedic practice.

The practice of Ayurvedic, the sister science of Yoga, breaks down the seasonal influences in relation to our different constitutions. We are now moving in the Vata season. Along with the beautiful colors of the leaves and the delicious harvest of fall vegetable, come the shorter, colder, windier, and dry season of Vata. Vata relates to wind governed by the element of ether and air. Just as the wind is changeable the energy in the body can be variable and strongly influenced by the change of environment. By keeping Vata in check we will minimize the risk of disease such as allergies, cold and flu’s and protect and build up our immune system to keep us healthy for the harsher elements of winter. Balancing vata dosha with diet, lifestyle, herbs, meditation, and yoga creates a strong body-consciousness allowing a person to live in harmony through both daily and seasonal changes.

***Here are a few signs that your Vata dosha might be increased and needs balancing:***

- If you tend to feel chilled more than usual by the wind and cold
- Feelings of heightened anxiety, nervousness, and fear or excess worrying

- If you are disturbed by interrupted sleep
- Bothered by excess noises and overstimulation
- Feeling of bloating
- Dryness—skin, hair, stools, eyes, etc.
- Feeling disorganized and easily overwhelmed
- Can’t sit still
- Fatigue following bursts of energy

## ***Guidelines for balancing the body:***

- Dress warmly keeping the neck warm especially when windy
- Make your meals earthy and warm. Take advantage of the seasonal root vegetables. Try an Ayurvedic Kitchery for a few days adding some of the root vegetable to the basic recipe.
- Avoid cold food or drinks. Enjoy herbal teas, warm spices milk or warm lemon water with honey
- Eating healthy fats like coconut, olive oil
- Keeping exercise to moderate levels. Gentle, yin and restorative yoga, tai chi
- Getting grounded with nature walks is excellent choice. Taking advantage of Vitamin D build up
- Avoid overly stimulating activities like TV, electronics, and excessive internet searching especially before bed time – All screens should be turned off at least 1hr before bed.
- Meditation and calming pranayama (breathing practice)
- Daily self-massage with warm grounding oils like sesame or almond oil is extremely calming to the nervous system.
- It is of utmost importance to keep a regular routine with regards to sleeping, eating, working, etc. is imperative for Vatas, who love variety and can easily lose focus. An ideal bedtime is between 9:30–10:00pm.

Joining some of our holistic practices coming this fall will support you in this turbulent time of fall and build strong immune system to keep us healthy and a strong feeling of balance.

***Join me for a 30 minutes complimentary visit and we will attempt to answer any questions that may support you in the coming months.***

***For more information or to make an appointment please call:***

***(613) 798-1000 or email: [info@oihc.ca](mailto:info@oihc.ca) or visit our website at: [www.oihc.ca](http://www.oihc.ca)***