

# OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

## Hidden Faces: Why People Act Differently While in Costume



Halloween is just around the corner which means many of us will be dressing up, going to parties, participating in costume contests, taking our kids trick-or-treating or heading downtown with friends. You will see some amazing costumes this year and we all know a really great costume requires commitment and being fully in character. But have you ever considered how the costume impacts your behaviour?

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There are a few theories around the idea that our clothing and impacts our psychological process and behaviours. One of the most interesting being a concept called ‘enclothed cognition’. This term was coined by researchers Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky in 2012 who experimented with people wearing medical lab coats.

They found the same result when testing the experiment three separate times. It showed that participants wearing a lab coat had higher selective attention than people wearing their own clothing. This result strengthened when they changed their language during the experiment and told participants that they were wearing doctor’s coats, even though they were the same lab coats. They concluded that the symbolism of an item of clothing also has strong impacts on our behaviour. This study has been repeated multiple times with different clothing items and different characteristics such as bicycle helmets and risk taking behaviour, nursing uniforms and empathy, watches and punctuality and so much more!



This further applies to wearing costumes. They found that children who dressed up as superheros perceived themselves as being stronger, more resilient and also spent more time on repetitive tasks than children in normal clothes. When people dress the part, we tend to act the part.

### How Does this Change When People Wear Masks?

When we wear a costume that covers our faces people tend to experience *deindividuation*. This is when a person has a sense of a anonymity. Being unknown can take away one’s fear of being judged which can help encourage bolder more uninhibited behaviour. Therefore doing things they wouldn’t normally do. When a mask combined with a costume provides almost a ‘psychological shield’ that allows people to feel like because they are ‘unknown’ they don’t feel the same responsibility for their actions. We see the same behaviours in crowds or large groups, also known as ‘mob mentality’ because no one knows who they are so they follow the crowd.





It's not always necessarily harmful or problematic, and sometimes it's even fun. Like being able to dance without fear of judgment at a concert or relax and unwind while on vacation. But there are a number of situations where deindividuation can have a negative impact on ourselves and others around us.

*Learn More about the Stanley Cup Riot Here*



Unfortunately, when we experience the right environmental factors deindividuation can make us impulsive and take part in risky behaviours we might not otherwise. An example of this the 2011 Stanley cup riot in Vancouver, an emotionally charged loss became a mob which concluded in 887 criminal charges laid against 301 people with an estimated \$4 million in damages.

When we add masks to the mix we can experience deindividuation as solo individuals or within small groups. This is exasperated in situations when masks become socially acceptable, such as on Halloween. So what do you do about it?

## How to Combat Deindividuation

It can be so much fun to be part of a big group having a shared experience, but be aware. Be self aware and be aware of others. It's still important to maintain control of your thinking and decisions. Being aware of your behavior, and its impact on others. Be conscious of the attitudes and agenda of the group that you are with. Do they have the same values and attitudes as you? If so, they're less likely to start doing things that are against your value system. Keep a healthy perspective of the situation at hand, if it's becoming too much leave. It's better to be safe and stay true to who you are than to be caught up in a moment that you will regret or put you in harms way.



You can also fight against the effects of deindividuation by being empathetic. If you're in a group that is becoming riled up and angry, take a moment to think about the person who's on the receiving end of that anger. Compassion can go a long way when going against the crowd.

Ultimately it comes down to self control and self awareness. Know what your comfortable with, what your values are and who you want to be. If the people around you don't align with this or if you find yourself straying it's time to take off the mask.

## What Good is Gratitude?

Believe it or not, gratitude is like magic. It has been proven to do so many amazing things such as improve mental and physical health, enhance relationships, foster resiliency and actually make you a happier person.



The word gratitude is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness. In some ways it encompasses all of these meanings. Gratitude is the thankful appreciation for what a person receives in their life, tangible or intangible. This increases people's practice of acknowledging goodness in their lives and in the process people often begin to notice goodness lies partially outside themselves. As a result, being grateful also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals — whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.

Research in positive psychology has consistently and strongly shown that practicing gratitude increases happiness. You can express gratitude in three frames of mind.

The first being through the past; this would be reflecting on past positive memories, being thankful for things that happened in the past or people you met. During the present; finding the good during your experiences, being thankful for small positive moments in life and acknowledging things that make your life meaningful. And finally in the future; maintaining a hopeful and optimistic attitude.

What's very cool is that gratitude is a quality you can strengthen overtime. Meaning no matter your level of gratitude and optimism currently, it is something you can cultivate.

### *Did you Know...*

Gratitude boosts self-confidence. A study that focuses on athletes shows that the participants with high levels of gratitude received from their coaches also experienced an increase in self-esteem over the period of six months the research was conducted

## How to Practice Gratitude

How you choose to practice gratitude is very individual and it needs to fit your lifestyle. Some people like to journal, some pray, others consciously look for silver linings. Ultimately it is whatever works for you and what makes you feel good.

**The first step is observation/reflection.** Get curious about yourself. How often do you say thank you or tell someone you appreciate them? Do you say it because it's polite or because you mean it? Once you have a better idea of where you sit with gratitude and how you express it in your life you can become more intentional.



**Small steps.** You will not become the most grateful person in the world overnight and only see with bright side if this is not natural to you. When getting started set the bar low; you want to set attainable goals. Pick one moment a day or a week to reflect and express genuine thanks. Ultimately, take time to affirm the good things you have received.

**Become mindful.** Mindfulness is the acknowledgment your thoughts have wandered and bringing them back to the present moment. By being present in your life it is easier to be grateful because you were ‘all there’ for the experience. When you are present in your life it is much easier to notice the small things that are valuable, good and make life great.

**Acknowledge others.** Become aware of the role others play in filling our lives with goodness; this can be anyone. Become aware of how these people add value to your life and how you feel towards them. If you want to take it a step further tell them!



## Gratitude Activities

Choosing how you would like to be grateful can be more challenging than you think. Here are some activities and ideas to get you started!

- Gratitude Jar - add one thing a day/week and review it at the end of the year
- Practice finding one good thing that happened each day
- Write a letter, review or thank-you card expressing your appreciation for someone
- Say consciously say ‘Thank you’ opposed to ‘Thanks’
- Take a walk and notice all of the little things you are thankful for (trees, sun, birds, sidewalks etc.)



## Updates, This & That

### We are pet friendly!

For anyone who doesn't already know Align Chiropractic and Wellness is pet friendly and we love meeting them. So if you are in a pinch or just feel bad leaving them at home bring your 4 legged friend in for your appointment. (Just be aware Adrienne will most likely ask for a picture to put on our Instagram story).

### Olivia is out of office.

Olivia will be out of office from **September 25<sup>th</sup> until October 7<sup>th</sup>.**

### Clinic Closure.

The clinic will be closed Thanksgiving weekend from **October 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>.**

### We welcome two new businesses to the plaza.

The parking lot just got a little busier. Both Studio Verso and Alphas have had grand openings. We are very excited to have them! Stop by and check out their new spaces.



### Breaking Barriers: Thriving with ADHD Group

Bright Start Counselling is now offering virtual workshops for those living with ADHD. They pride themselves in being affordable, giving you tools to use immediately, providing insurance receipts and offering evening sessions to accommodate your busy schedule.

To learn more connect with Ashley Phillips!

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