There are tears behind my smile
And a mask I wear...it's called denial
Life is tragically too real
From this loss I will not heal

No one has a single clue
How much it hurts...my losing you
Although they think I'm doing fine
Sometimes I feel I've lost my mind

Memories are all that I have left
After this terrible life theft
A heart that hurts beyond control
Deep down to my very soul

There are tears behind my smile
And a mask I wear...it's called denial
I have cried with and without tears
And have been doing so for years

I have found no place to hide
Carry all of this inside
No earthly words that do explain
The kind of life that does remain

I look for signs most every day
That you are close...not far away
I play a game within my heart
As if you never did depart

There are tears behind my smile
And a mask I wear...it's called denial
Missing you my special child
When you were here I truly smiled. ♥

The Average Person Tells
Four Lies a day or 1460
Lies a Year, a Total of
87,600 by Age 60.
The Most Common
Lie Is:
““I’m Fine.”

You ask me how I’m going,
and I look at you and wonder if you really want to know?
Do you want to hear that each and every day I put on my
"normal" mask?
Do you want to know that if I have to wear my mask for too
long that I get to the stage where I have to run away and
rip it off or I will go insane?
Do you want to know that I get headaches every day be-
cause this mask no longer fits - I am not the same person
you once knew, even though I try to keep up the pre-
tense?
Do you want to know that try as I might it is hard to get
enthusiastic about things now?
Do you want to know that I still have nightmares about
"that day"?
Do you really want to know that my heart still aches, and
my throat is still tight?
Do you really want to know that I will never "be over it",
and that at 6 months I am only just beginning to accept
that it happened?

I look in your face and think no.
You want to look at my happy mask.
You want to show you are compassionate by asking, but
you want me to make you feel good by telling you I am
okay. You really do not want to help me feel better today
by listening, so I respond "I'm okay" ©

By Wendy: http://mypapasito.com/Poems-print.html
The Mask

I have a face I put in place;
It’s what I wear when folks are there.

For those only who want to see
the way they think I ought to be.

I live in times that have no light,
just cloudy darkness, endless night.

I no longer see the sun,
I laugh but never feel the fun.

When I arise to start a day,
I stumble as I make my way.

I don’t know who’s really me,
I’m not the one I used to be.

I have no heart to fill with joy,
I lost it when I lost my boy.

The future is so bleak to me,
I choose to not let others see.

So when people stop to ask,
I hide behind my smiling mask.♥

Written by Dianna J. Brendle

My Mask

Every morning I wake up and put on a mask,
the mask makes everything seem alright,
But they don’t know I cry at night,
The nightmares just wont go away
If only I knew it was your last day
For six years I’ve felt this pain
The feeling just went away,
Everyone thinks I’ve dealt with your death the best,
but without this mask I’d be a mess.♥

© Ellie

My Mask, Grief Poem http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/my-mask-3#ixzz1b7I7vMIx

She Hides Her Face

by found as both credited to Kerri and also Melantha Abra-

She hides her face when she’s not alone
she wears a mask, not the face she owns

Free from the troubles the troubles of life
free from sin and worries and strife

It’s everyone else she wants to be;
Be just like them supposedly free

But when night time falls
and she climbs into bed
her mask falls apart
and her heart fills with dread

She screams and she cries but no one can hear.
She wants them to know, know all her fear

Her fear of facing a world with no mask;
afraid they won’t like her afraid she won’t last

So she waits for the day with hope in her heart
when she’ll wear her own face and make her new start .♥

You’ve Got to Be Strong

by Wendy http://mypapasito.com/Poems-print.html

I lost my love, I lost my best friend.
I need for someone to comprehend.
I am moving forward, I am being strong,
But why is weakness so wrong?
Every minute of every day I am strong.
I put on my mask and I joke and I laugh.
However there’s only so long I can keep going on.
Each day is eternity since he’s been gone.
The burden of grief is an incredible load,
I know I need help to travel this road.
I stumble, then reach for someone to hold.

"You’ve got to be strong, you’ve got to move on" I’m told.
I sit on the roadside with sadness and cry.
"You’ve got to be strong, you’ve got to move on" they sigh.
I buckle under this burden I carry each day.
"You’ve got to be strong, you’ve got to move on" they say.
I lost the love of my life; I lost my heart and soul.
I just need a little help to stay in control.
I am being strong, so strong,
But why, oh why is weakness so wrong ...♥
Grief doesn't end at the funeral or the cemetery, although the rest of the world would like to think that the bereaved have achieved "closure" at the funeral and are now ready to "move on". Grief doesn't end at the funeral or the cemetery, although the rest of the world would like to think that the bereaved have achieved "closure" at the funeral and are now ready to "move on". Grief doesn't end at the funeral or the cemetery, although the rest of the world would like to think that the bereaved have achieved "closure" at the funeral and are now ready to "move on". Grief doesn't end at the funeral or the cemetery, although the rest of the world would like to think that the bereaved have achieved "closure" at the funeral and are now ready to "move on".

In fact, it's just beginning. You don't stop loving someone just because they died. So why should the bereaved try to hide their sorrow just because the rest of the world can't stand to "see" them hurt? The bereaved have long ago learned of the importance and necessity for masks.

Why won't anyone let the bereaved simply be bereaved? Why can't we sometimes wallow in the hurt or to wander in the emptiness of our heart? Are we all afraid to recognize pain? Are we afraid to peak of hurt in such honest terms or are we simply unaware of the length of time that healing requires? Have we truly become the "Fast Food, Fast Forward" society where microwaves and email have replaced homemade brownies and handwritten notes? Even when someone does ask, "How are you?", their footsteps carry them quickly away before I can even think of an "appropriate" response. Does anyone care any more or have we run out of time for caring?

I'm bereaved and there are days when I want to share that and days when I don't. But no one can tell the difference because I have learned to wear THE MASK and to always look the same, regardless of what is dwelling just beneath my surface smile. I have learned, as we all do, to smile quickly and to turn away slightly when the tears threaten to spill down the cheek. The MASK is in place. I don't want to wear a mask any more. I have run out of energy to pretend that I am "FINE" when I'm not and to smile even when my heart is breaking inside.

Maybe bereaved people should LIMP a bit on those days when we feel scattered or shattered or hurt or empty inside. Maybe we should recognize the depths of the wounds that grief inflicts instead of trying to soothe the rest of the world. I have noticed that people are nicer to those who limp a bit. We hold doors open for them. We offer them a seat on the bus. People who limp a little seem to get more sympathy and understanding than I do in my grief. I'm not asking for a LOT of sympathy, in fact, maybe none. But I would like some comprehension that grief isn't something you "get over" quickly (or ever). I'd like to let people know that I still am capable of moments of extreme pain, even years after a loved one has died. And that when I experience that pain, I don't want to wear a mask. I want the freedom to hurt and to heal, both publicly and privately. I don't want to limp in order to have a kinder, gentler world at my door. I just want to BE, whatever I am whenever I am. No more masks...just me trying to hang on one more day. I want a sign, an outward symbol of my bereavement so others will know that I am bereaved, not crazy or sick. I want something to wear that will tell everyone I am working my way through a terrible hurt.

In the "Old days" black armbands were worn to acknowledge one's bereavement. Some cultures still wear a piece of torn cloth to symbolize the tear in the family fabric. Some communities still place a black wreath on the door of a grieving family so others may know of their hurt and offer their support. I want a sign that says "I'M BEREAVED" and I want a hug. At least I'd like your understanding that I am not ill or mentally incapacitated. I just hurt today and I could use some support.

Since signs and masks are too cumbersome, I've found the perfect symbol. You've seen it on lapels everywhere, in many different colors, each carrying a special message. I've found a Mourning Pin that is a simple and dignified way to saying, "I'm bereaved". It is a small, simple black enamel ribbon pin, similar to the ones you've seen in red for AIDS awareness, pink for breast cancer, green for organ donation. This one is black for bereavement and can be worn anywhere, anytime you want to recognize your bereavement.

The awareness ribbon has become a universal symbol of support and compassion and those who wear them become members of a universal family of understanding. What a terrific way to create a community of support! No longer will grieving people have to limp a little in order to receive some small amount of care and support. Entire communities have worn this ribbon to show support for those caught in the web of pain and sorrow that bereavement brings. Individuals can wear the Mourning Pin whenever they wish to acknowledge their grief: anniversaries, special days, or every day. By wearing this outward symbol of grief, we can start to push back the clouds of misunderstanding surrounding grief and bereavement and help strengthen the universal awareness of grief.

Let's create an openness and a tolerance and an understanding of the universality of grief and a willingness to be present for each other. Whenever you see someone wearing a black Mourning Pin, you will know that a life has been lived and loved and that sorrow isn't a weak or negative face. No more masks, please. Let grief have its place among the living as a symbol of how much you loved. We are all fellow strugglers on the path, but grief is a journey that does not have to be traveled alone. Wear the black ribbon pin to support those who grieve or to acknowledge your own bereavement. You will not be alone. We are a universal family, broken by death, but mended by love. ♥

You can order the Mourning Pin from Grief Inc. www.griefinc.com $2 plus shipping and handling). http://tinyurl.com/TheMourningPin
END OF DAY POSTING BY A BEREAVED MOM

The nights are so long…
I do my duty of going to work…
smiling for friends..
taking the other kids where they need to be…
more smiling for friends…
put the kids and husband to bed…
put on the fake "everything will be fine smile"
and then cry on the couch by myself for the next few hours
until I have exhausted all my energy…
life is so hard without you my angel~
Mommy Loves You So Much

I wear a mask to hide the hurt. People around me think I am so strong and courageous but I'm not it's the mask and I wear it well. I cry all the time, I work at night to hide the fact that I don't sleep. It's been 6 years and it hasn't gotten easier.
~Nicole

I have always the been the strong one in the family if I fall I get right back up. I always say I'm ok I don't want to talk about the loss of my son or others say I know it makes u sad so I won't say anything. I wish I could let it out I know it's been 5 years but it never gets easier. I don't want to let my other 2 children see that I'm still hurting so I put on a smile and be the best mom for them.
My surviving 2 boys are 7 and 2 years old. My 7 year old was actually in the delivery room when Aaron (my son who passed) was born... I feel I have to be strong for them and show them death is natural and even though some times mommy is sad and misses brother I love them very much... I try to stay positive for them and for myself so I don't go insane from the grief.
~Andrea

I guest I be wearing a mask for the rest of my life...
~ Jason’s dad.

Tears... I'm losing strength to put the mask on anymore
~Linda, Joey’s mom

Every time I cry I get told to suck it up because crying is a weakness.  ~Tabbie

The mask I have worn is to both protect myself from those who say hurtful things or just don't care, as well as to protect those around me from being alienated by my grief. I've found that working so hard to keep the mask of being ok on all the time is exhausting and not really helping me nor those close to me. I have made a conscious decision to remove it and just be real with myself and those around me. Those that shy away or say hurtful things are not true friends and I have no room for them in my life.
~ Kie

I, too, wear masks; though I think that I am one of the most mask-less people I know. Among the masks that I still pull out are ones for my surviving child and his wife, who I think just don't want to "hear about it anymore", for my husband, because I am trying to add quality TO his life, instead of constantly deplete it; for my TCF group, sometimes, because I am a leader and facilitator and meeting time is THEIR TIME; for other bereaved friends, even, who seem to need it of me I used to teach, and believe: I CAN'T HELP HOW I FEEL, BUT I CAN HELP HOW I THINK AND ACT. And in that teaching, I allowed that when we THINK and ACT positive, light, upbeat, that eventually we FEEL positive, light, upbeat. This theory worked for me through a myriad of life's challenges. But I found that after the death of my daughter, I just Don't Care To "Pretend" anymore. I find that ACTING how I am NOT FEELING, depletes all of my energy. I am not becoming happier, lighter, more positive....I am just learning how to PERFECT MY ACTING SKILLS.

~Bettie-Jeanne, Robyn's mom

I function better. I hurt no less

Some of the Conversation on Facebook this week about MASKS

I wear a mask to hide the hurt. People around me think I am so strong and courageous but I'm not it's the mask and I wear it well. I cry all the time, I work at night to hide the fact that I don't sleep. It's been 6 years and it hasn't gotten easier.
~Nicole

I have always the been the strong one in the family if I fall I get right back up. I always say I'm ok I don't want to talk about the loss of my son or others say I know it makes u sad so I won't say anything. I wish I could let it out I know it's been 5 years but it never gets easier. I don't want to let my other 2 children see that I'm still hurting so I put on a smile and be the best mom for them.
My surviving 2 boys are 7 and 2 years old. My 7 year old was actually in the delivery room when Aaron (my son who passed) was born... I feel I have to be strong for them and show them death is natural and even though some times mommy is sad and misses brother I love them very much... I try to stay positive for them and for myself so I don't go insane from the grief.
~Andrea

I know we hate wearing our "I'm okay" mask but I don't think it's always a bad thing. It hurts the people who love us, to see us in such deep and agonizing pain, knowing there is nothing they can do to help. Our grief is, after all, very personal. Even among ourselves when we see another mother having a particularly bad day, we long to be able to somehow reach through her pain and soothe her aching heart. This is a road too many travel but we all walk it alone.
~Lonnie, Gian’s Mom—13 months through the grief journey

sometimes wearing the " I'm ok" mask is just a way coping and getting through the moment....
~Kathy

We wear many masks at many different times; sometimes to protect us from others; sometimes to protect others from us. Peace
~ Lynda

[by wearing my mask] I'm protecting others from my grief.  ~Cynthia

I function better. I hurt no less
~Bettie-Jeanne, Robyn's mom