

ISSUE NO. 12

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# STEP 12 MAGAZINE™

*Carrying A Message of Hope in Recovery*

## Masks

### *Our Personal Personas*

*by Samuel M. Hanna, M.S.W.*

**EXCLUSIVE 4 Part Series on  
The Neurobiology of Addiction**

*by Dr. Keerthy Sunder*

**A Salute to Our Teachers in Recovery**

*By Judy Redman, InterCoast Colleges*

**Melting the Masks with Love**

*by Beck*

**Info for Parents about Cyberbullying**

*by Mendi Baron, LCSW*

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# Dr. Judi Hollis

Experience, Strength, and Hope  
For People Struggling with Food Obsession



## The Nonsense of Normal

Judi shared this personal experience, "I was at dinner the other night with some friends. After our lovely meal, a few of us were packing up our leftovers. Conversation around the table continued. I heard voices and the occasional laughter. I didn't hear the words, nor did I participate in the discussion. Instead, I was completely focussed on one woman's leftover avocado slices (let's call her Mary). My demeanor was engaged, but my eyes kept shifting to the seemingly neglected avocado slices.

"Mary was involved in the table-talk so she was taking forever to pack up her food — an excruciatingly slow process. I just KNEW she was going to leave the extra plate of avocado slices and I was waiting to make sure before I asked if I could have them.

"Tick Tock.

"My focus on those avocado slices was bordering on obsessive. When she finally picked them up and slid them into her "doggie-bag" I felt disappointed! My disappointment was multi-faceted. I was not only disappointed that she kept the avocados that she ordered, I had also missed out on an entire portion of the dinner conversation. That is not normal. Normal people don't do that.

"I have often used the example, 'a normie is someone who, when food comes to the table at a restaurant, finishes their sentence.' 40 years of recovery under my belt, and I am still not normal."

It is unrealistic to expect to be normal someday. We would have to define what normal is for everyone which is an impossible endeavor because it is so very subjective and we are all unique individuals. Mary isn't normal just because she's not obsessed with food. Mary

is just not obsessed with food.

Maybe Mary struggles with other obsessions and may beat herself up for not walking out of a shoe store without the red patent leather pumps she might need someday when the other 5 pairs in her closet wear out. Yet as recovering overeaters, we call Mary a "normie" because she's not obsessed with food.

"Recovery is not an adjustment model. Recovery makes us into people who are less competitive, more compassionate, relate honestly, seek en (lighten) ment, both physically and spiritually, and walk to the beat of a different drummer. Our initial maladjustment propels us into a way of living that makes us personally well adjusted, but living outside society's usual norms."

Our first priority is to discontinue self-destructive behavior. When we learn how to be honest with ourselves and with another fellow sufferer we become accountable. When we become accountable, we begin to learn what works for us and what doesn't.

We adjust our attitudes and behaviors to be more balanced, more productive and more joyful — without our addictive substances. These tweaks and modifications change as we change and evolve as we grow.

"Leaving dinner the other night with no avocado slices in the doggy-bag and no recollection of the after-dinner conversation is a reminder that I am not 'normal!' We are not normal by our current society's standards. Who needs to be? This is a better way to fly."

by Karen VanDenBerg based on interview with Judi Hollis in May 2015

(c) 2015. Dr. Judi Hollis is a Licensed Family Therapist, author of several books and educational materials, motivational speaker, radio and television expert. Judi would love to hear from you! You can ask Judi questions and access her materials, at [www.judihollis.com](http://www.judihollis.com) or call 1-800-8-ENOUGH

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