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Values

PSYCHOLOGY

That Halloween costume may reveal, not hide, the real you

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Trying to figure out what's really going on with that new beau of yours? Well, call off the private investigator because Halloween is coming up.

Masks and costumes, those seeming purveyors of anonymity, can actually reveal a lot about a person's personality, say experts.

"Your Halloween mask does not really hide you – it may well show the true you," said Herb Vest, CEO and founder of TRUE, a popular online dating service. "Price, comfort and convenience are factors, but people live a fantasy when they choose a costume, and their choices reveal interesting parts of their inner selves."

"It's their alter-ego concept, something they always wished they'd been like, emulating a lifestyle they never had the guts or skills to go for, and even when people go into the macabre side, the over-the-edge side, it may just be an exercise in really kicking out some stupid, rigid barrier they have constructed out of boredom or habit or ritual," said Verena Aibel, a personal coach and owner and founder of Vibrant Visions International in Hackensack.

"Masks reveal an enormous amount about people and Halloween is just an excuse to try something new on for size."

So, what does your costume say about you – or better yet, your date? The team of psychologists at TRUE recently surveyed 5,000 of their clients and found a correla-

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tion between certain personality traits and the following styles of costumes.

■ **Sexy:** You keep your sexuality under wraps most of the time and view Halloween as a time to let loose.

■ **Famous:** You're trendy. You want people to know that you are in the know and want people to associate certain star-like qualities with you.

■ **Scary:** You may have some fears, but becoming a scary character at Halloween helps you overcome them.

■ **Innocent:** You yearn for safer and simpler times, like childhood.

■ **Evil:** You have a dark side and let it come out on Halloween. Or you're attempting to alienate others.

■ **Powerful:** The desire to be seen as omnipotent may signify underlying feelings of helplessness and insecurity.

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