

“Behind the Mask”:  
A Pandemic Photography Project

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Presentation Time: 15-30 minutes

“Behind the Mask” is an independent photography project that was inspired by a growing awareness that we have been hidden behind **masks** during this global pandemic. What began as a concern that we would forget each other's expressions and smiles, became an opportunity and an invitation to look behind the mask and to ask the question, “Who are we behind our masks”? Behind the presentations, facts and details of our lives - beyond our differences, where we live or what we do.

I am a photographer and photojournalist, and my **authentic** curiosity was the reason behind this project, which began in May of 2020. I **begin by** photographing random subjects in two successive images - one with the mask on and then the mask off, and I ask them to share who they are behind their mask. **Who are they in their heart?** What would they like us to know about them?

Behind the Mask is currently being presented in two ways - as a traveling exhibit of 50 of the strongest subjects, and as a visual presentation that includes a 10 minute video that reveals the transitions between images, followed by the direct quote of each subject. I am including a link to a promotional video that gives you a better sense of what this project is about, and how it would be presented to an audience. **And** you can see recent press and interviews about this project **in** the *Behind the Mask* section of my website at [www.BethKPhoto.com](http://www.BethKPhoto.com).

The uniqueness of this project **makes** it an interesting speaking presentation. I begin by introducing the concept and inspiration behind the project, including the experience of a recent cross country trip that documented who **many** Americans **are** behind **their** masks. (5-10 minutes.) The people, experiences and subjects are as diverse as they are touching. From a woman in Massachusetts who is more than her cancer diagnosis, to a **vagabond** in the middle of a field in Texas, who simply wanted us to know his name, **Brian**. The stories are endless, as are the teachings and gifts behind them.

The presentation is followed by **a Q & A session** - and this is where I can share stories about this project - the conversations and connections I have made along the way, the personal insights and opportunities I have had, including both touching and frightening moments on my cross country trip.

We have **all** struggled through this time. We have lost loved ones, and have found some comfort in our shared grief. We are collectively accepting, and creating, a new normal. **During the process of creating this project**, I have found that **in all** **regardless of** our diversity and differing opinions, behind our masks we have missed each other. Behind our masks, no one is really a stranger.

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