

# Uncover the truth that's hiding beneath the illusion

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During my previous marriage, I of-

ten got the chance to look inside while dining with the neighborhood

"ladies who lunch." After a few glasses of wine, these women would crack open. Secrets such as sexless marriages, addictions, affairs, abuse, and philandering husbands would slip out, until pain and shame forced them underground once again. Desperate to maintain their own particular page of the American Dream, these women struggled daily to hide the truth from themselves, as well as the world.

When one actually steps back and takes a good look at how often image passes for truth in our society,

we can then understand how essential it is to finally reveal our true face, both individually and collectively. If we are ever to evolve into a more insightful, humane and honorable nation, we need to face the truth within our own lives and that of our country. If it is ugly and depraved, so be it. At least from this vantage point, we can work to clean it up, instead of simply whitewashing it with a fresh coat of illusion.

Actually, I find it infinitely positive that we are finally "coming out of the closet," and showing who we really are. For every person unwillingly "caught in the act," there are many who voluntarily choose to reveal the truth of their lives in order to bolster their integrity and help others. In recent years, admissions of depression and addiction by high-powered, high-profile men and women have significantly lessened the social stigma originally associated with these conditions. Most, if not, all Americans admire those brave few who readily admit their mistakes, show remorse, and are

willing to work toward restitution and healing their lives.

Along with this movement toward openness, at the same time, we must guard against "too much of a good thing" by revealing everything about an individual or group. People, governments, and some institutions are entitled to a certain amount of privacy. We don't want to become even more voyeuristic than we already are and twist our search for truth into a license to peep into people's private worlds.

As we move further into truth, we need to remember that individuals, as well as those institutions created by individuals are inherently flawed. Instead of hiding these flaws, however, we need to acknowledge their existence and work to change them, if they seem destructive in any way. With this new vision of realism in tow, we can then embrace ourselves and our country, despite our imperfections and weaknesses, knowing that "the truth will finally, and resolutely, set us free."