



Stand for America™

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The Great Masquerade

During this Halloween Season, we masquerade. So, there is no better time to talk about the greatest of all masqueraders.

But, who is it, this greatest of masqueraders?

Why, it is The Truth, of course.

If you should ask how The Truth can be a masquerader, then The Truth has you fooled, as he did me. The Truth fooled me for many years, and maybe almost all of my life, as time will tell.

Now, let me tell you why, and it will make sense to you, if you can be open-minded enough to allow it:

The Truth is a jokester, or a liar. For, each time, he comes to me in the exact appearance of my desire. I later discover that he wore a mask. The Truth laughs at me, and I am his fool.

But now that I understand the rules of his game, I am the better at his challenge.

Such as it is with a game of champions, the harder I play, the harder he plays -- step for step. The more effort I expend to remove his mask, the more tightly he holds it. And then, for each layer of mask I remove, feeling accomplished and tired, I again discover that there is, even yet, another layer. And, The Truth laughs at me. And I am his fool. Again.

But, game on, Truth. I contend.

Let me give you an example. This morning I looked in the mirror. I thought, "well, I look okay for a 50 year old." Now, let me tell you the truth: if I were 25 and woke up from a long dream and looked at myself in the mirror as I look today, I would scream. Well, you say, "but, you are a 50 year old." Aha! I thought that as well. The Truth got me. But, as much as it hurt, I caught him. (That is The Truth's weapon, you know, it is easy to just concede for the mask, and to be The Truth's fool. And, better yet, it is comfortable. All we need to do is to deafen our ears so that we do not hear him laugh at us.)

But, back at you, Truth: I know that the reality is that, when I was 25, I looked like I did because I suffered through not eating fattening foods, not eating late at night, measuring my cereal portions in the morning, jogging and exercising regularly. I did what it took. I endured the pain that produced the pleasure.

Let us play on. With some harder thinking -- a confession of sorts -- I then said to myself, "Well, maybe I don't look that good, but I don't have time anymore for that effort, because, as a responsible adult, I prioritize on earning a living to provide for my family." Well, at least now I am in the game. Do you see why?

My first way of thinking denied the reality, but created a relative standard that allowed my reality to fit nicely into it. "*For a 50 year old, I look good.*" Wow, for a time, I felt very good about myself. Nice.

With my second way of thinking, I accepted the harsh reality, but I excused it with a comfortable rationalization. "Okay, I look like heck, *but that is life.*" At least by accepting the reality, I stepped up the game.

But, sorry, Truth, I do not just intend to play this game, I intend to win. Truth, I will have you. So, I think some more:

"Yes, yes, yes, I admit it, I confess: I look like heck." Pure and simple. That hurts, such as it does, I suppose, for admitting addictions.

And, yes, now I've got The Truth pinned. He's down.

But, do not let me fool you. The game is not over. In fact, the game is just beginning. The Truth is downright nasty.

Now that I've finally admitted to myself that I look like heck, do you know what The Truth does to me now? He puts a TV commercial in front of me that tells me getting into shape will be easy. Better, The Truth tells me that it will be inexpensive and fun. It must be true. Everyone in the commercial is happy. Forget that they are selling something for their own advantage. Seeing is believing.

So, what does any of this have to do with America?

If we do not know, The Truth gladly tells us. Do we hear him? We are the greatest nation from the beginning of time, greater than Greece and Rome. Those were not proud nations, such as we. American Pride will carry us through everything, even if Proverbs and Aesop say it comes before a fall.

But, Truth, we stand and contend. We will have you, Truth. We read your books. Flattery will get you nowhere.

We know that what makes America great is traditional humble discipline and work. We do what it takes. It worked before. In this nation of freedom, nothing is free. When we want to improve our condition in life, the truth is pure and simple: our work is what works. It is true that greatness is a gift to those who apply the rule and work for it.

The joke is on you, Truth. Trick or treat.

-- Gregg Zegarelli

* The name of the publication is derived from a special publication of [The Entrepreneurial Spirit](#),[®] entitled, "[I Stand for America](#)." The purpose of this publication is to provide a reflection upon the intersection of character, values, wisdom and traditional patriotism in the United States of America.

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