

UNDERSTANDING MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CARRY EVERYTHING ALONE

Making room for support when life has become heavy

ARTICLE 2 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



You Don't Have to Carry Everything Alone

Making room for support when life has become heavy

"Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives." — Brené Brown

If You're Reading This...

If you're reading this today, perhaps life has felt heavy for a while.

Not because one big thing has happened.

But because lots of little things have slowly collected.

Responsibilities.

Work.

Family.

Bills.

Expectations.

People needing your time.

People needing your strength.

People needing your answers.

Sometimes I wonder whether I've become so focused on carrying everyone else that I've stopped noticing what carrying all of this is doing to me.

Maybe you've wondered that too.

Somewhere Along the Way...

I can't remember exactly when I learnt that I should be able to cope on my own.

Maybe nobody ever actually said it.

Maybe I simply watched the men around me.

Perhaps they worked hard.

Kept going.

Didn't complain.

Put everyone else first.

If they struggled...

I never knew.

So perhaps I learnt that this was what adulthood looked like.

Keep going.

Stay quiet.

Sort it out.

Don't burden anyone.

I wonder...

Is that really strength?

Or is it simply something I've practised for so long that it now feels normal?

I Carry More Than People See

Most people only see what I do.

They don't always see what I'm carrying.

The conversations that stay in my head long after they've finished.

The pressure to provide.

The fear of getting something wrong.

The responsibility I feel for the people I love.

The tiredness I don't talk about.

The disappointment I keep to myself.

Sometimes I wonder how many other people around me are doing exactly the same thing.

Looking okay.

Feeling anything but.

What If Nobody Knows?

Sometimes I tell myself,

"If people knew how I was really feeling, they'd worry."

Or...

"They've got enough going on."

Or...

"I'll deal with it."

Maybe I will.

Maybe I always have.

But another question quietly appears.

Why do I believe I have to?

I Wonder...

You don't need to answer these now.

Just notice what happens when you read them.

When life feels difficult, what do I usually do?

Who knows when I'm struggling?

Do I let anyone see the difficult days?

What makes asking for help uncomfortable?

What am I afraid might happen if I admitted life feels hard?

Have I confused independence with isolation?

When was the last time someone supported me?

Did I allow them to?

What would I say to a friend carrying everything I carry?

Why is it sometimes easier to show compassion to other people than to myself?

Perhaps...

Perhaps I've become so used to being reliable that I don't notice how exhausted reliability can become.

Perhaps I've convinced myself that because I can carry everything...

I should.

But they're not the same thing.

Being capable doesn't mean I have to carry every responsibility on my own.

What Does Support Look Like?

Support doesn't always mean having all the answers.

Sometimes it means sitting with somebody while life feels difficult.

Sometimes it means saying,

"I'm finding things harder than usual."

Sometimes it means accepting help without apologising for needing it.

Perhaps support looks different for everyone.

The important question isn't whether my way is right or wrong.

It's whether it's helping me.

A Gentle Invitation

Today, I wonder if I could ask myself one question.

Not...

"Can I cope?"

Because perhaps I can.

Perhaps I've been coping for years.

Instead...

"What would make today feel just a little lighter?"

Maybe it's talking.

Maybe it's resting.

Maybe it's saying no.

Maybe it's accepting help.

Maybe it's simply admitting to myself that life has felt heavy.

Whatever the answer is...

It doesn't have to be earned.

Reflection

Before you leave this page...

Pause for a moment.

Take one slow breath.

Then ask yourself...

If I believed that asking for support was an act of courage rather than weakness... what might I do differently this week?

You don't need to act on the answer today.

Simply notice what comes into your mind.

Sometimes awareness is where change begins.

Final Thoughts

Many of us have been praised for being dependable, resilient and capable.

These qualities are valuable.

But they do not require us to carry every burden in silence.

Allowing ourselves to receive support does not diminish our strength—it acknowledges our humanity.

Each of us needs connection, understanding and compassion at different times in our lives.

As Brené Brown reminds us:

"Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives."

Perhaps strength is not measured by how much we can carry alone.

Perhaps true strength also lies in recognising when we deserve someone to walk beside us.

And perhaps, if you're reading this today, that is the only thought you need to carry forward.