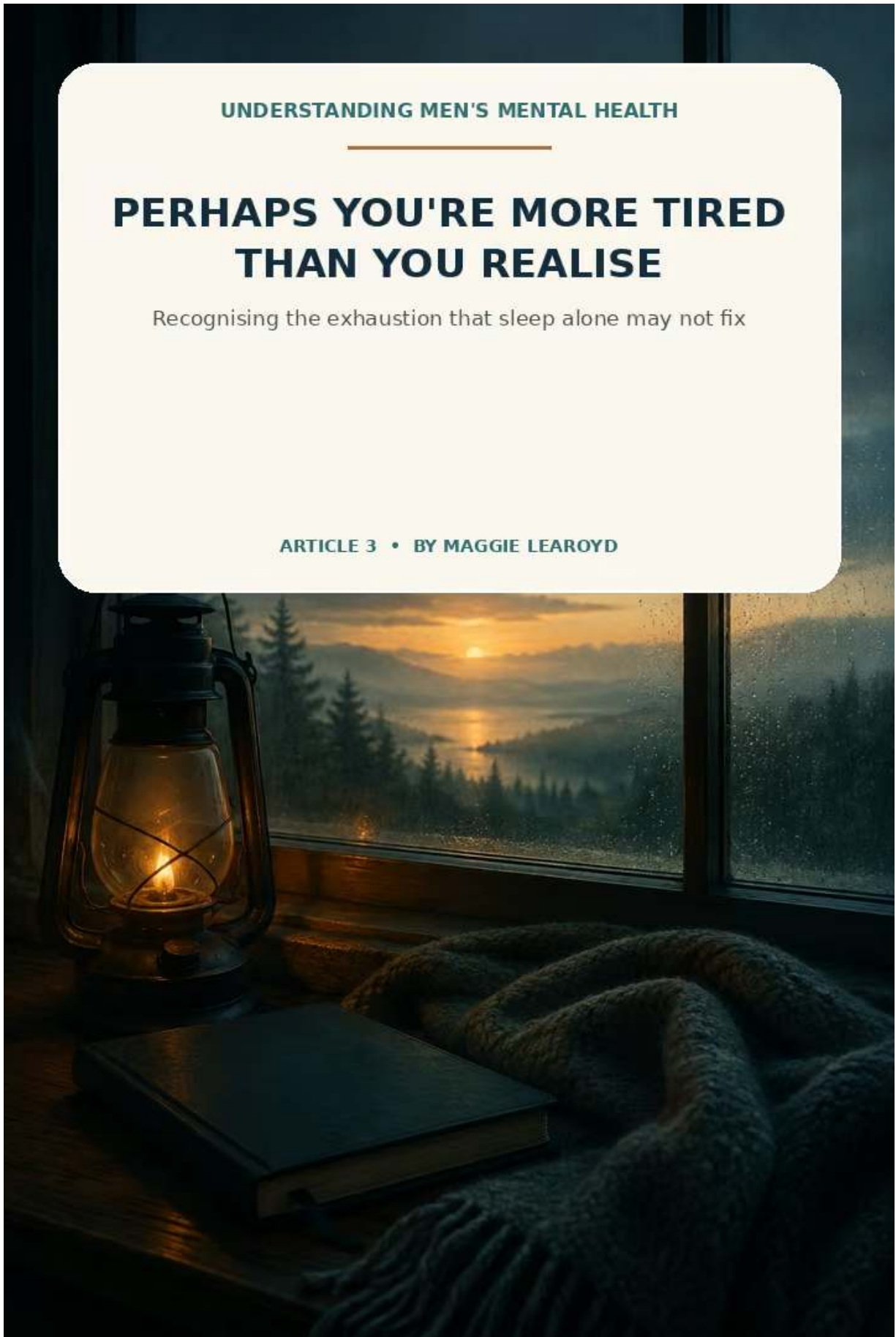


UNDERSTANDING MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

PERHAPS YOU'RE MORE TIRED THAN YOU REALISE

Recognising the exhaustion that sleep alone may not fix

ARTICLE 3 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



Perhaps You're More Tired Than You Realise

Recognising the exhaustion that sleep alone may not fix

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes... including you." — Anne Lamott

If You're Reading This...

If you're reading this, I'd like to ask you something.

Not because I expect an answer.

Not because I think something is wrong.

Just because sometimes we spend so much time asking everyone else how they are that we forget to ask ourselves.

So...

How are you?

Not the answer you give at work.

Not the answer you give your family.

Not the automatic,

"Yeah... I'm alright."

I mean...

How are you, really?

Perhaps you don't know.

Perhaps you haven't stopped long enough to find out.

And that's okay.

I Wonder If I've Become Used to Being Tired

There are different kinds of tired.

There's the tired that sleep usually fixes.

Then there's another kind.

The tired that follows me into Monday.

The tired that sits beside me in meetings.

The tired that makes me quieter than I used to be.

The tired that means I laugh a little less.

The tired that makes everything feel like more effort than it once did.

Sometimes I tell myself,

"It's just been a busy week."

Then another week passes.

And another.

And another.

I wonder...

At what point does "busy" become my normal?

Have I Forgotten What Rest Feels Like?

When somebody says,

"You should slow down."

My first thought is often,

"I can't."

There are too many people depending on me.

Too much to do.

Too many responsibilities.

Maybe I'll rest next week.

Next month.

After this project.

After the children are older.

After things settle down.

But...

When exactly do things settle down?

I've been waiting for that moment for years.

What Happens When I Keep Going?

Sometimes I notice little changes.

I'm less patient.

I lose interest in things I used to enjoy.

I become quieter.

Or perhaps louder.

I snap over small things.

I withdraw.

I stop replying to messages.

I tell myself I'm just tired.

Perhaps I am.

Or perhaps my mind has been trying to get my attention for quite some time.

I Wonder...

You don't have to answer these now.

Simply notice which question stays with you.

What kind of tired am I carrying today?

When did I last wake up feeling genuinely refreshed?

What have I stopped doing because I "don't have time"?

What helps me feel calm?

When do I feel most like myself?

What drains my energy?

What restores it?

Am I surviving each week or actually living it?

What would one hour just for me feel like?

Why does resting sometimes make me feel guilty?

Perhaps...

Perhaps I've confused resting with giving up.

Perhaps I've believed I need to earn time for myself.

Perhaps I've forgotten that even the strongest people become exhausted.

Not because they're weak.

Because they're human.

If My Best Friend Felt Like This...

I sometimes find this question easier.

If somebody I cared about described the life I'm living...

Would I expect them to keep going exactly as they are?

Or would I tell them they deserve a break?

Would I encourage them to slow down?

To ask for support?

To be kinder to themselves?

It's interesting how often we offer compassion to other people while quietly denying it to ourselves.

A Gentle Invitation

Today isn't about changing your whole life.

It isn't about walking away from your responsibilities.

Perhaps today is simply about noticing.

Noticing your breathing.

Noticing your shoulders.

Noticing how long you've been holding everything together.

Perhaps that's enough for one day.

Awareness doesn't demand immediate action.

Sometimes it simply opens a door.

Reflection

Before you leave this page...

Close your eyes for a moment if that feels comfortable.

Take one slow breath.

Then ask yourself quietly:

If I gave myself permission to rest without feeling guilty... what might change?

Notice whatever answer arrives.

There's no right response.

Only your response.

Final Thoughts

Many men become so skilled at meeting the needs of others that they gradually lose sight of their own.

They continue showing up.

Continuing providing.

Continuing solving problems.

From the outside, everything may appear to be functioning well.

Inside, however, exhaustion can quietly become a way of life.

Rest is not something we earn after proving our worth.

It is a fundamental human need.

Giving yourself permission to pause is not a sign that you've stopped caring about the people who depend on you. In many cases, it is one of the most compassionate things you can do—for yourself and for those around you.

As Anne Lamott reminds us:

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes... including you."

Perhaps today, you don't need to fix everything.

Perhaps you simply need to remember that you are not a machine.

You are a human being.

And human beings need space to breathe.