

UNDERSTANDING MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

WHEN DID SOMEONE LAST ASK ABOUT YOU?

Being known for more than what you do for everyone else

ARTICLE 4 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



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Being known for more than what you do for everyone else

"The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention." — Richard Moss

Before You Read Any Further...

I'd like to ask you something.

Not because you have to answer.

Not because I'm expecting anything from you.

Simply because questions sometimes help us notice things we've been too busy to see.

When was the last time somebody asked how you were... and waited long enough to hear the real answer?

Not...

"How's work?"

Not...

"Everything okay?"

But...

"How are you, really?"

If it's been a while...

You're not alone.

I Sometimes Wonder...

I wonder how many people know me because of what I do.

Perhaps they know me as...

The dependable one.

The calm one.

The funny one.

The provider.

The problem solver.

The strong one.

The one who always turns up.

They're all parts of me.

But are they all of me?

Sometimes I wonder whether I've become so good at playing those roles that I've forgotten how to simply be myself.

Do People Know Me...

Or Do They Know The Version Of Me That Keeps Everything Together?

Perhaps that's an uncomfortable question.

It is for me.

Because sometimes it feels easier to keep being useful than it does to be vulnerable.

If I'm helping everyone else...

Nobody notices I'm struggling.

If I'm solving problems...

Nobody asks whether I have any.

If I'm always available...

Perhaps nobody realises I'm running out of energy.

I wonder...

How long have I been wearing that version of myself?

What Happens To The Person Behind The Responsibilities?

Sometimes I imagine putting everything down for just a moment.

Work.

Expectations.

Responsibilities.

Being strong.

Being reliable.

Being the one everybody depends on.

Who would I be underneath all of that?

Would I recognise myself?

Or have I become so identified with what I do that I've forgotten who I am?

I Wonder...

As you read these questions...

Notice which one makes you pause.

Not because you have to answer it.

Simply because it caught your attention.

Who do I talk to when life feels heavy?

When somebody asks how I am, do I answer honestly?

What would I like somebody to ask me that nobody ever does?

When was the last time I felt truly understood?

What do I wish people knew about me?

What parts of myself stay hidden?

Why do they stay hidden?

What am I protecting?

What would feeling emotionally safe actually look like?

Do I allow other people to care for me?

Perhaps...

Perhaps I learnt that love had to be earned.

Perhaps I learnt that being useful made me valuable.

Perhaps I learnt that if I kept everyone else happy...

Everything would be okay.

But perhaps...

Just perhaps...

My value has never depended on how much I carry.

Or how much I achieve.

Or how much I sacrifice.

Perhaps my value has always existed.

Even on the days when I'm tired.

Even on the days when I'm quiet.

Even on the days when I need someone else.

What If Someone Really Saw Me?

Imagine, just for a moment...

Somebody asks,

"How are you?"

And this time...

They don't interrupt.

They don't try to fix you.

They don't compare your experience to theirs.

They simply listen.

How would that feel?

Would it feel comforting?

Uncomfortable?

Strange?

Would you even know where to begin?

Sometimes the hardest part isn't finding someone who'll listen.

It's believing our experiences are worthy of being heard.

A Gentle Invitation

You don't need to tell anyone anything today.

You don't need to make a phone call.

You don't need to solve your life.

Perhaps today is simply about noticing something.

Maybe you've spent years being available for everyone else.

Perhaps it's okay to wonder what it might feel like if someone was available for you too.

Reflection

Before you move on...

Sit quietly for a moment.

Take one slow breath.

Then ask yourself...

If somebody really listened to me today... what might I finally say out loud?

There's no right answer.

Whatever comes into your mind is enough.

Final Thoughts

Many men move through life carrying invisible responsibilities. They become the steady presence that others rely on, often without recognising the emotional weight they carry themselves.

Over time, it can become easier to ask others how they are than to acknowledge our own need to be seen, heard and understood.

Being listened to is one of the most powerful human experiences. When we feel genuinely heard, we often begin to understand ourselves more clearly.

As Richard Moss wrote:

"The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention."

Perhaps that invitation extends to ourselves as well.

What if, just for a few moments today, you offered yourself that same attention?

Not to judge.

Not to fix.

Simply to notice.

Because sometimes healing begins not with finding the perfect answer, but with finally feeling that someone—including yourself—is willing to listen.