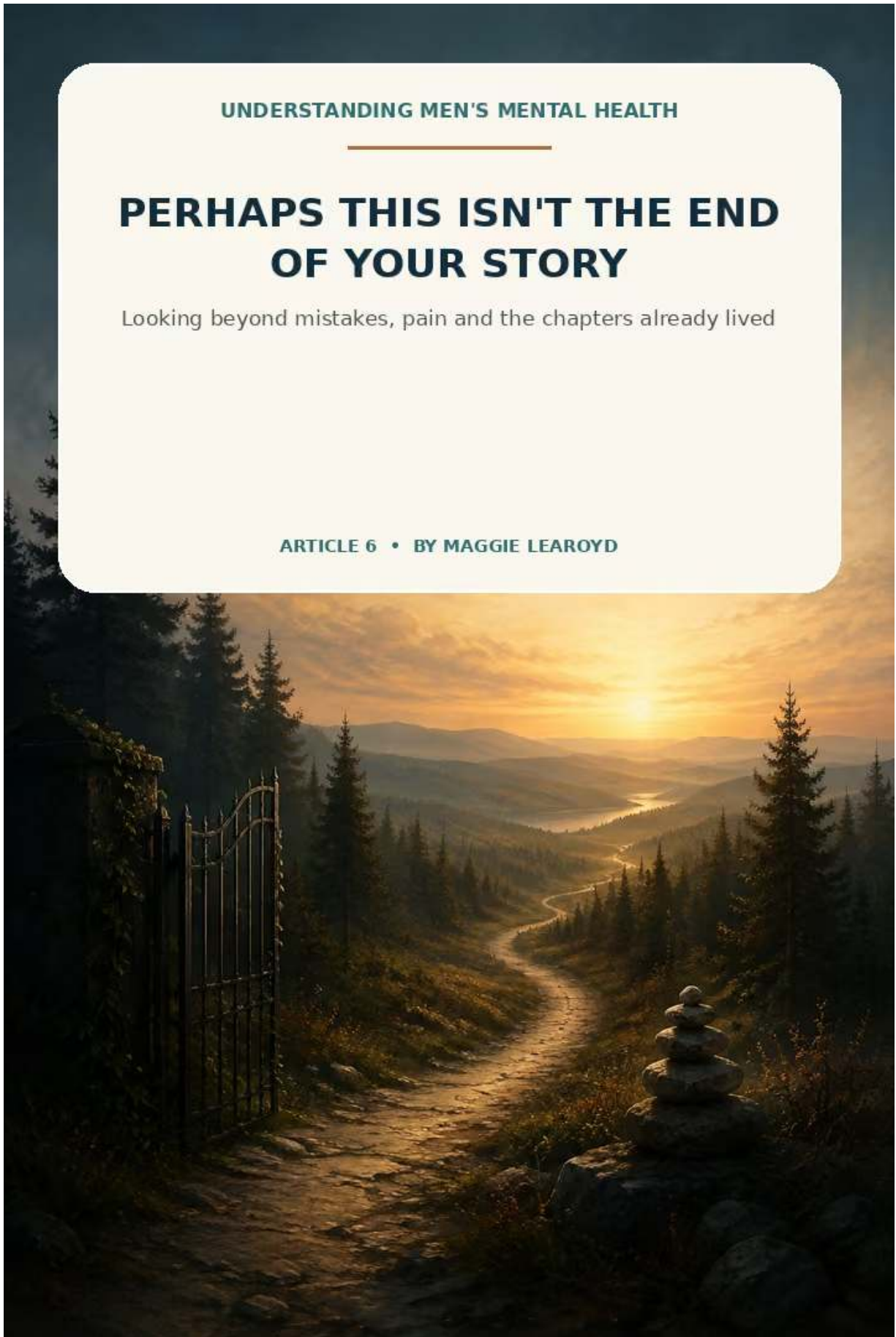


UNDERSTANDING MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

PERHAPS THIS ISN'T THE END OF YOUR STORY

Looking beyond mistakes, pain and the chapters already lived

ARTICLE 6 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



Perhaps This Isn't the End of Your Story

Looking beyond mistakes, pain and the chapters already lived

"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars." — Kahlil Gibran

Before I Read Any Further...

Perhaps I've been searching for answers.

Or perhaps I wasn't searching at all.

Maybe I simply stopped on this page because something inside me felt curious.

If I've read the articles before this one, I've probably spent a little time thinking about myself.

Maybe I've recognised parts of my own life.

Maybe I haven't.

Neither is wrong.

Simply stopping to reflect is something many of us rarely give ourselves permission to do.

Perhaps that's enough for today.

I Wonder...

How often do I measure my life by the things that haven't gone well?

The opportunities I missed.

The conversations I wish I'd had.

The mistakes I still replay.

The times I wasn't the father...

The partner...

The friend...

The son...

The man...

I hoped I'd be.

I wonder...

Do I notice the things I've survived just as much?

Perhaps I've Been Harder on Myself Than Anyone Else

If somebody spoke to the people I care about the way I sometimes speak to myself...

I'd probably step in.

I'd remind them they deserve kindness.

Patience.

Understanding.

Yet somehow...

Those same words often feel difficult to offer myself.

Why is compassion sometimes easier to give away than to receive?

If My Life Were a Book...

Would I really believe this chapter tells the whole story?

Or would I recognise it as exactly that...

One chapter.

Not the ending.

Just one part of a much bigger journey.

When I look back at my life...

There have already been chapters I never thought I'd get through.

Somehow...

I did.

Not perfectly.

Not gracefully.

But I kept going.

Perhaps I've forgotten how resilient I've already been.

I Wonder...

Which of these questions feels most important today?

What have I overcome that I rarely give myself credit for?

What strengths have difficult experiences helped me develop?

What am I still learning about myself?

Who has stood beside me when life has been difficult?

What gives me hope, even on difficult days?

What would I like the next chapter of my life to feel like?

If fear wasn't making today's decisions, what might I choose differently?

What would living with more kindness towards myself look like?

What am I ready to let go of?

What do I want to carry forward?

Take your time.

Some questions are companions rather than puzzles.

Perhaps...

Perhaps I don't need to become a different person.

Perhaps I simply need to become more familiar with the person I've always been.

The version of me that laughs.

The version of me that feels.

The version of me that dreams.

The version of me that deserves compassion just as much as everyone else.

There Is No Finish Line

Mental wellbeing isn't something I achieve once and keep forever.

It's more like tending a garden.

Some seasons feel full of growth.

Others feel quiet.

Sometimes I need to prune.

Sometimes I need to plant something new.

Sometimes I simply need to wait.

Every season has value.

A Gentle Invitation

As I finish reading these articles...

Perhaps I don't ask myself,

"What's wrong with me?"

Instead...

Perhaps I ask,

"What have I learnt about myself?"

Maybe that's a better place to begin.

Reflection

Before I close this page...

I'd like to leave myself with one final question.

Not to answer immediately.

Not to solve.

Simply to carry with me.

If I believed I was worthy of the same patience, understanding and compassion that I so freely offer others... how might tomorrow feel different?

Perhaps there isn't one answer.

Perhaps there are many.

Final Thoughts

Understanding ourselves is rarely a destination.

It is an ongoing relationship that evolves throughout our lives.

There will be seasons when life feels manageable and seasons when it feels overwhelming. There will be moments of confidence and moments of uncertainty. None of these experiences define our worth.

What often matters most is not whether we avoid struggle, but how we respond to ourselves when struggle appears.

Can we meet ourselves with curiosity instead of criticism?

Can we recognise that needing rest, support or reassurance is part of being human rather than evidence of failure?

Can we allow ourselves to believe that growth is still possible?

Kahlil Gibran wrote:

"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars."

Our scars are not the whole story.

Neither are our mistakes.

Neither are our hardest days.

If you're reading this today, perhaps the most important thing to remember is this:

You are still growing.

You are still learning.

And your story is still being written.