

What The Silence Actually Looks Like

For the man who has been carrying something he has never named.

You are not falling apart. You are functioning. You show up. You do what is required. From the outside, everything looks fine.

That is what the silence looks like.

It does not look like a man who is struggling. It looks like a man who is handling it. Who is dependable. Who keeps things moving. Who does not make a fuss.

But underneath all of that — something is running that was installed long before you had any say in it.

The silence does not sound like silence.

It sounds like anger that comes from nowhere. It sounds like the conversation that shuts down before it starts. It sounds like the explanation you cannot quite find for why you left the room, why you drink, why you work the hours you work, why the person closest to you says they cannot reach you.

The silence has many sounds. None of them are the truth of what is actually there.

Seven ways the silence shows up in a man's life

1. You perform being fine. You learned early that showing difficulty was not safe or acceptable. You became very good at appearing fine. That skill has served you. It has also cost you.
2. You manage through anger. Not because you are an angry man. Because anger is the only emotion that was permitted. Everything else — grief, fear, helplessness, shame — learned to come out as anger.
3. You work instead of feel. Work is measurable. Feelings are not. You have built a life around what is measurable.
4. You keep people at a specific distance. Close enough to function. Not close enough to see. You have become skilled at the managed version of intimacy.
5. You cannot name what is wrong. You know something is. You cannot find the words. You never learned the words. Nobody taught you this language.
6. You carry it into the next generation. The voice that was installed in you is looking for somewhere to go. If you do not interrupt it, it goes into the people who are watching you most closely.
7. You tell yourself other people have it worse. This is the quietest and most effective way the silence maintains itself.

This is not who you are. It is what you learned.

The tunnel does not only belong to women. Men walk it too. Most men walk it alone, without language, without a map, without anyone asking the right question.

The Silence was written to ask that question.

You have been carrying something for a long time. Nobody ever asked what it was.

That changes here.

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