

The ten questions nobody has asked you

Twenty minutes. On your own. Nobody watching.

Everybody around you thinks you are fine. That is usually the problem. You are the one who holds it together at work, at home, at church, and nobody has thought to ask you how you are actually doing, because you are the one who asks everybody else.

These are ten of the questions I ask a man when he sits down in front of me. They are not clever and they are not a test. There is no score at the end and nothing to send back to me. You answer them on your own, in your own handwriting, and for most men that is the first time the thing has ever existed outside their head.

Four things before you start

Print it if you can. Something happens on paper that does not happen on a screen.

Write the true answer, not the one that sounds right. Nobody is going to read it.

If a question makes you want to move on quickly, that is the one to stay with.

Do not do all ten in a rush. Two or three honest ones beat ten quick ones.

QUESTION 1

How are you actually doing?

Not the answer you give people. The real one.

QUESTION 2

What is the thing you were hoping nobody would ask you about?

You already know what it is. Write it down anyway.

QUESTION 3

How long has it actually been like this?

Not when it got bad. When it started.

QUESTION 4

What is the part of this you have never said out loud to anybody?

Nobody is reading this. That is the point of it.

QUESTION 5

Who is the version of you that other people get?

Describe him. Then say how far he is from the one writing this.

QUESTION 6

What are people thanking you for that is quietly killing you?

There is usually one thing. Sometimes it is a whole role.

QUESTION 7

What are you protecting?

Your name, your family, your position, somebody else. Be specific.

QUESTION 8

What is it costing you to keep this quiet?

Say it in real things. Sleep, temper, your wife, your health, the years.

QUESTION 9

What have you decided you are just going to live with?

The thing you stopped fighting. Most men have one and never say it.

QUESTION 10

If nothing changes, where are you a year from today?

Not the worst case. The likely one.

Now the only part that matters

Read back what you wrote. Not to fix it. Just to see it sitting there in your own handwriting.

THE LAST ONE

Out of everything on these pages, what is the one thing you are taking with you?

One sentence. Yours, not mine.

And then do this, this week

Say that one sentence out loud to one person. Out loud, to a face, not in your head and not in a message. Your wife, a friend, a brother, me, anyone who will not try to fix it in the first ten seconds.

That is the whole exercise. Not because saying it solves it, but because a thing you have never said out loud has never once been dealt with, and it never will be while it stays in there.

If you got to the end of this and the thought you are left with is **I need to say this to somebody**, then you already know what the next thing is. I sit with men who are carrying something they cannot say out loud. Some of them run companies. Some of them are barely holding on. The room is the same.

There is a free twenty minute call on my site. You talk, I listen, and if I am not the right person I will tell you that. **ricardozaal.com**

If it is heavier than that right now, please do not sit with it alone tonight. SADAG on 0800 567 567, any hour, any day. In an emergency, 10111. There is no version of this where reaching out is the weak thing to do.