

The Band-Aid That Covers Gaping Wounds in Many Men's Hearts

These two little words are like conversational Teflon. Nothing sticks. The tough questions are deflected, enabling you to continue down the same path without being bothered.

You can hide a lot of unpleasant stuff behind "I'm fine," the fears and frustrations in your career, the dysfunctions in your marriage and family, a crisis of faith, even your addictions—at least for a while. It's like using a band-aid to cover a gaping wound.

Why are we so reluctant to reveal what's really going on in our life? It's as if we think we are all alone in our struggles and no one would understand, but that's not true. To one degree or another, we all struggle with the same things. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, *"No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, and He will not permit you to be tempted above what you can endure, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

We have a common enemy and common struggles. That's what the Scriptures say. In *Tender Warrior*, Stu Weber writes: *"So everything that's killing you is somewhere in the chest of every man you know."* Realizing we are not alone can be the beginning of more substantive conversations and more meaningful relationships.

Here are three things that can help:

1. **Substantive conversations** don't typically take place in a foyer or a hallway. We need to carve out time and space that allow enough margin to keep our minds from drifting to our

next meeting.

2. We need to **unplug from technology** so we are not distracted by the fondling of our mobile devices. Keep it in your pocket or in your briefcase, not on the table.

3. We need to listen, **really listen**, with care and compassion. Agendas are helpful in a business meeting, but a mechanical checklist can be harmful in a relational context, especially if the conversation feels more like an interrogation. Most guys will shut down.

Deflecting with “I’m fine” is understandable.

These things require time and practice, but it’s absolutely worth the effort and the investment. In my experience, the best conversations happen within the context of trustworthy friendships that have been cultivated with care and camaraderie.

Don’t settle for the usual. Don’t default to “I’m fine!” {eoa}

Tierce and Dana Green were married in 1987 and have one daughter. Tierce spoke widely as a speaker and consultant for 25 years and wrote curriculum for organizations like LifeWay and Student Life. He taught the principles of Authentic Manhood over a seven-year period in a seasonal gathering called The Quest to over a thousand men each week. He has recently become pastor of House Churches at Church Project in The Woodlands, Texas.

For the original article, visit .