




The Power of Unspoken Words: Understanding What We Hold Back

When we're struggling with depression or low energy, what we *don't* say often speaks volumes. Sometimes our silence becomes a protective shield, hiding our true feelings behind quick deflections, forced smiles, or complete withdrawal. This exploration into our unspoken words can be the first step toward authentic self-expression and healing.

The Masks We Wear

Many of us have perfected the art of hiding behind "I'm fine" when someone asks how we're doing. We might deflect with humor, change the subject entirely, or simply avoid interactions altogether. These protective responses often stem from legitimate concerns about vulnerability, but they can also keep us isolated when we most need connection.

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|  | Common Ways We Hide Deflecting with humor or sarcasm, saying "yeah" when we're not okay, changing subjects, or avoiding people entirely |  | What Our Silence Protects Us From Judgment, being labeled as weak, embarrassment, loss of respect, uncertainty about next steps, or fear of unleashing overwhelming emotions |  | What We Wish Others Knew The unspoken truths that we carry—our struggles, our needs, our authentic experiences—that remain bottled inside |
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Finding Your Voice, Even If Just For Yourself

The journey toward expressing our true feelings doesn't always begin with sharing them with others. Sometimes, the most powerful first step is simply acknowledging them to ourselves. Writing down one truth you've been holding back—just for your own eyes—can be profoundly liberating. This private acknowledgment validates your experience and helps you recognize patterns in what you're protecting and why.

Remember that your silence served a purpose. It protected you when you needed protection. But as you grow stronger, you might find moments when letting someone trustworthy peek behind that silence brings unexpected relief. Start small—perhaps with a therapist, a close friend, or even in a journal—and notice how naming your experience can sometimes diminish its power over you.

Your unspoken words matter. They reflect real experiences and valid feelings. By gently examining what you don't say and why, you create space for greater self-compassion and, when you're ready, more authentic connections with others who might be feeling just as alone in their silence.

What You Don't Say Sometimes it's not what we say—it's what we bury. When depression shows up on the job, it often hides behind silence, sarcasm, or just pushing through. This worksheet invites you to explore the parts of yourself you've been keeping quiet.

1. How I Respond When Someone Asks, "You Good?"

- a. ☐ I deflect with humor or sarcasm
- b. ☐ I say "yeah" even when I'm not
- c. ☐ I change the subject
- d. ☐ I avoid people so they won't ask
- e. ☐ Other: _____

2. Things I've Wanted to Say But Haven't Finish this sentence at least twice: "I wish someone knew..."

1. My Silence Is Trying to Protect Me From...

- a. ☐ Judgment or being labeled weak
- b. ☐ Embarrassment or loss of respect
- c. ☐ Not knowing what to do next
- d. ☐ Opening up something I can't close
- e. ☐ Other: _____

2. One Thing I Might Say—Just to Myself—for Now Write down one truth or feeling you've been holding back, just for your own eyes.