IDENTITY AND MASKS



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THE MASKS

The Theater

How to learn to recognize yourself without pretending

We live in a world where everyone, eventually, wears a mask. Sometimes to survive, sometimes to please, sometimes to hide who we truly are. I, too, have worn many masks: that of the model son, the strong man, the perfect partner, the tireless professional. Masks that, at times, protected me. But overtime... they emptied me.

The risk is forgetting who is underneath. When theater becomes real life, and even we cease to distinguish the stage from reality, we begin to live scripts written by others. And we lose ourselves.

The hardest truth is this: no one truly knows you. Not even you, until you have the courage to strip away all pretenses. It is a brutal process. It shows you cracks, shadows, forgotten pieces. But it is necessary. Only in this way can we build something authentic. Not perfect—but true. Because keeping up masks wears you down. It distances you from others. From yourself. It locks you in an elegant prison... but a prison, nonetheless.

Removing them takes courage. You must question everything: what you want, who you are, the relationships you have built on pretense. But when you truly see yourself—even for just a moment—something happens. You feel alive. Light. Free.

And you meet people who do not ask for a show. They see. They accept. They recognize.

Because the true theater of life is not what you show, but that fragile moment when you look at yourself and say, “This is me. I do not need to pretend anymore.” And that... is the revolution.

The Naked Face

A naked face is not a social media pose, nor a skin- enhancing filter. It is truth. It is exhaustion. It is history.

It is what stares back at you in the mirror when you have stopped acting. That look marked by sleepless nights, by thoughts burning inside, by wounds no one sees—but that you bear every day.

Looking at yourself truly is a battle. No excuses. You see the gap between what you were and what you hoped. Between what you show and what you feel. It is not a gesture for those seeking validation: it is a sincere punch that brings you back to your roots.

We live among constructed images, between ostentatious perfection and packaged fiction. But that face—yours— remains. Even if you cover it with polite smiles.

And when you finally look at yourself without lying, a strength is born that you cannot buy: the strength to be authentic.

That is where it all starts. Not to get you noticed. But to make you stay, without the need to disappear.

What I Never Said

There are words I have kept inside for years, like unexploded landmines. Brutal truths. Restrained pain. Confessions I could not utter, for fear of judgment, of fragility, of the discomfort of others.

Silence was not comfortable. It was defensive. Speaking meant exposing oneself. Risking hurt again.

I have learned that the world teaches you to contain your emotions, to make pain invisible, to not disturb with your suffering.

But that silence became an internal scream. A burden. A wall. It was also what led me to write. To find a space where those words could live without having to justify themselves.

Unspoken words have become my most powerful tool. Because no matter how long you have been silent, the truth always finds a way.

Inside a Script Not Mine

For years I acted. Roles that were not mine. Lines I had not written. Choices I did not feel. Society, family, expectations: everyone had the script ready.

I followed him. Out of fear. To avoid disappointment. For lack of alternatives.

And that is how I lived: playing a part. Seeking approval. But meanwhile... I was losing myself.

There is a subtle, almost invisible pain in living a life that is not yours. Every gesture becomes a cage. Every "yes" is a renunciation.

Until the day you cannot take it anymore. And then you must decide to keep acting or tear it all up and rewrite the scene.

I chose to tear up.

It was hard. The judgment. The loneliness. The guilt.

But then—the voice. Mine. Finally. And that is where I really began to live.

Of Silence

Silence can be protection. But also, distance. It can be a scream that no one hears... but that tears you apart from within.

I used it to defend myself. When I was speechless. When I could not afford to break down. When speaking meant exposing myself to further wounds.

But silence—if prolonged—becomes isolation. It becomes a room without windows.

We live in a world that demands us to be talkative, always ready to explain, justify, communicate. Yet, silence has its own strength. It can be rebellion. It can be dignity.

The challenge is to use it consciously. Not as an escape, but as a choice.

Now I use it to listen to myself. To find my center. No longer to hide.

Silence, today, is no longer my prison. It is my sacred space.

The Unscripted Stage

Life is a vast theater where everyone acts, but almost no one chooses their part. The script is written by family, society, and expectations. And you adapt. I too was a model actor: polite, quiet, and correct. But inside, a void grew, as if every round of applause were a slap in the face to my authenticity.

Masks, at first, protect. Then they imprisoned. That day I chose to remove them. And I discovered that underneath was a man: imperfect, contradictory... true.

This book was born there. From the moment I stopped pleasing and started breathing. Because only those who stop acting... begin too truly live.

The First Mirror

The first marriage? An elegant mask. A gilded cage. A script written by others, which I recited with a smile on my face and a vacuum-packed soul.

I wanted stability. Belonging. But I found myself denying who I was, every day. Between silences, imposed roles, poorly concealed fears. That marriage was the mirror in which I clearly saw the gap between what we pretend to be and what we are.

It was my first real struggle with identity. There I had to choose to stay within the role... or tear away the costume. And finally, I truly began to

live.

Take It All Off

I wore roles like clothes. The tough guy. The winner. The lover. But underneath was emptiness. A growing emptiness.

Then they fell. One by one. And only what remained was who I was: not perfect, but authentic.

Looking at yourself for real is a slap in the face. But also, a liberation. Only then can you begin to build yourself with clean hands.

And do you know what remains? A scarred face. But yours. One that no one can change.

Free Ties

Not all bonds require signatures or rings. Some relationships are valuable precisely because they do not demand. They do not impose. They do not chain.

They are open spaces where you stay because you choose to stay. Not out of obligation, not out of fear. But out of truth.

In those bonds, I learned freedom. And the struggle it brings. Because absolutely loving, without masks or contracts, requires daily commitment. It takes courage. It takes presence.

And responsibility is needed: towards oneself and towards others. Freedom and love, when they are true, are made of the same material.

What I Inherited

No one ever told me, "Hide." But they taught me. Through looks, unspoken sentences, and premature judgments.

As a child, I smiled to reassure. I adapted; I complied. I was the little emotional tightrope walker of the house. The good son. The strong male. The one who understood everything on his own.

But one day, after yet another “Everything’s okay,” I felt the emptiness behind the sentence.

I looked at myself. And I saw all the inherited masks: that of the man who does not cry. That of the perfect professional. That of the understanding companion even when he would implode.

I started removing them. One by one. With fear. With shame. With anger.

And underneath there was not a superman. But a real man.

Families, Mothers and...

Family is not what you show. It is what you hold back.

Adults patch things up. Children bring storms. Sometimes the hero is the most fragile. And often, a man's true strength rests on the silence of a woman who does not ask but holds everything together. Writing is my way of putting things in order. To share what I never knew how to say. What was left to write?

THE BODY AND PAIN

The Journey Home

Returning to one's roots is not a poetic gesture. It is an exploration of shadows, omissions, and legends no one has ever dared to tell.

I dug. In family history. In the glances avoided. In the silences passed on. In the grudges swept under the rug.

There I found the source of many of my fears. But also, the strength to break the chain.

Roots are not a curse. They are a starting point. They can support you or suffocate you. And I have chosen to use them as a foundation—not as ballast.

Only by facing that past could I truly begin to become myself.

The Silent Force of Origins

No words were needed. In my family, strength was not announced: it was done. No grand gestures, no blatant "I love you." There were hot dishes left silently, hands placed on shoulders, presences that asked nothing. That was how we told each other everything. That silence, often harsh, was also a protection. We did not cry. We did not give in. We resisted. A lesson that shaped me—and for years also held me prisoner.

Today I look back and see that that strength was real... but not gratuitous. It required masks, blind resistance, sacrifices that were not always necessary. But it was also the pillar that held everything together when everything was crumbling. A compass made of silence—and of belonging.

Deep Roots, New Steps

For years I have tried to escape my past. To rewrite it. To ignore the voices of the absent, the expectations of others, the faces that are no longer there but continue to speak to you inside.

But then I understood: roots cannot be erased. They are chosen.

They are the foundation from which to start again. Not the cage in which to remain. We inherit mistakes, shadows, lessons—even from those who are no longer with us. But we decide whether to make them a burden or a foundation.

I chose to transform that invisible legacy into presence. To make it a compass, not a chain. To recognize every piece— even the painful ones—because that is where my identity is born.

Memory Is a Bridge

Memory can bind you or free you. In my case, it was both. For years, I lived as a prisoner of memories that crushed me, yet those memories also held the key to recovery. Remembering is not about suffering the past. It is about choosing what to do with it.

Memory is a first anchor that holds you steady when everything else falls apart. But if you learn to listen to it, it can become a springboard. I crossed it like a minefield: pain, lessons, fragments of truth.

Only when I stopped denying it and learned to read it without judgment was I able to build something new. Remembering is an active act, a gesture of power. And memory... is the force that connects everything you no longer want to ignore.

Inside My Father's DNA

My father did not say much. He spoke with gestures, with silences as solid as bricks. His presence filled the room, but his emotions... remained elsewhere.

Growing up, I fought not to be like him. But some things you do not choose to live within you.

I found myself reacting like him. Shutting myself down the same way. Treating the pain is like a problem to be solved in the garage, with tools clutched in my hands. One day, rereading old family letters, I found something. A phrase written in block letters: "I couldn't say it, but it was love." It was her handwriting.

That day I stopped rejecting his code. I began to decipher it. And I understood that within his silence was the same fire that burns within me. Only he... had never learned to name it.

Those Wounds That Keep Us United

In my house, we discussed things in hushed tones. Crises were avoided. Strong emotions were inappropriate.

But there were cracks everywhere. Words held back. Cries postponed. Anger squashed in drawers with folded underwear.

And yet, when I sat at the table with them—with my mother, my brother, with whoever was left behind—I understood that beneath that impeccable surface... we recognized each other.

Not for what we had said to each other. But for what we had kept quiet together.

Those shared wounds were the only language we still spoke. And while sometimes a hug would have been enough, I realized that certain bonds do not come through words. They come through the cracks. The ones you do not mention... but everyone knows.

The Cage of Traditions

As a child, I thought that "family" meant following the rules without question. That "respect" meant pretending everything was fine. That "honor" meant never appearing tired.

Traditions were taught to me like medals. But some... were velvet-lined cages. Elegant, polite, but still cages.

I have struggled with it for years. Trying to stay in my place. To appear grateful, aligned, presentable.

Then I saw my son fail—and laugh. I saw myself be afraid—and breathing.

And I realized that there are traditions that should be honored. And others that should be discarded like clothes that are too tight.

Cages, even when lined with velvet, remain prisons. And at a certain point... you must choose comfort or freedom.

I Stopped Belonging to My Desk

The desk was made of frosted glass. Elegant. Tidy. Every morning, I arrived ten minutes early. Computer on, coffee hot, chair adjusted to perfection. It was my kingdom. The place from which I coordinated, decided, and signed. It gave me status. Security. Stature.

Then one day, while I was correcting a project for the umpteenth time, I looked at my firsthand keyboard. And I did not recognize them.

His fingers moved automatically, but his mind was elsewhere. It was like seeing a hollowed-out body, a silent man behind glass.

I got up. I went to the bathroom. I looked at myself in the mirror. And I said to myself, voicelessly: "You no longer belong to yourself."

It took me months to let go of that desk. Not out of fear. But out of love. Because, when something has given you so much... leaving it is like betraying it. But staying there... is betraying yourself.

Today, my desk is smaller and more disorganized. But when I sit down, my hands do not shake. And time... does not slip away.

The Simplest Lighting

Elevator. New York. Late. Wrinkled shirt, full head, empty stomach. I entered. There is a man. Older, Asian. He looks at me and says, "You are sad."

I nodded, just barely. He smiles: “You’re sad because you want to be right.” I stared at him. Surprised. Tired.

“He who lives to be right,” he says, “sleeps alone.”

Ding. Door opens. He goes out. He disappears.

I remain there, with that sentence on me like a brusque caress.

Since then, every time I argue to assert my position, I think of him. Of his gentle smile. Of his dry wisdom.

I do not know who he was. We never saw each other again.

But his elevator is still in my head. And every now and then I get on it. To come down a little more lightly.

The Book That Read Me, Without Reading

I was twenty. I did not read much. Just manuals, a few sports magazines, and bottle labels. Then a friend lent me a book. She said, "Just read three pages. If it bores you, forget it."

It was a simple story. But the words seemed to have been written by someone who knew me. Each sentence was like a clean mirror: I saw in it my anger, my hunger, my melancholy.

I finished it in two days. At night. Sitting on the floor. I cried without knowing why. That book did not teach me anything. It recognized me.

Since then, books have become my new skin. And every time a page makes me shiver, I know I am not alone.

A Letter with a Broken Voice

I had said something mean. Impulsive. One of those that hurt more than the truth.

The person in front of me lowered his gaze. He did not cry. He did not react. He walked away.

The days after that scene consumed me. I would wake up at night with that sentence bouncing between my teeth. I wanted to fix everything, but I could not find the voice.

Finally, I wrote. A short letter. Handwritten. No excuses. Just the truth. It said, “I do not ask for your forgiveness. I just ask you to know that I can do better than this.”

A week has passed. Then two. A reply arrived: “I heard your voice while I was reading. That is fine.”

Since then, I have known that apologizing is not humiliating. It is remembering that you are human. And wanting to stay that way.

Coffee with My Son Outside the Hospital

It was the first day after his surgery. Minor, but invasive. The kind of pain that hurts especially to those watching. We went out. He was tired. But he was hungry.

We sat on a step. I got two coffees from the vending machine. The cups wobbled. The taste was uncertain. But that coffee was full. Of relief. Of breath.

We spoke little. He smiled. I looked at him as if he were rebuilding himself from the inside out.

That moment never made it into any diary. But since then, every coffee I drink... I seek that silence.

That peace does not ask for proof.

The Closed Doors of My Memory

There are rooms I enter only when life slows down. Rooms without windows. Only memories. Voices. Echoes.

Every door is a person. Someone I loved badly someone I let go without honor, someone who never asked me to explain.

One door is for her, the one who saved me without ever knowing how. Another is for that friend I stopped looking for... but who I dream about every now and then.

I do not seek forgiveness. I seek recognition. Even if only from myself.

I walk down that corridor without fear. Sometimes I leave a thought on the floor. Sometimes I open the door just to breathe. Then I close it again.

Building From Within

The conflict between past and present is real. Inside me, there were two opposing forces: the need to stay and the desire to escape. Guilt, fear, the need for love... everything pushed me to hold on to what I knew. But staying stuck in a place that no longer contains you is a slow form of self- destruction.

So, I learned to build the future with ancient bricks. I made peace with the shadows; I stopped fighting my origins. Not to endure them. But to transform them.

True growth comes only when you integrate everything: the failures, the love you have received badly, the absences. Only then can you become free. With strong roots, but with your own steps.

Origins and Omissions

Searching for your origins is an uncomfortable journey. You delve into silence, you come across half-told stories, blurred faces. But every step along that path made me feel more powerful. Because I was reclaiming my history.

In that search, I found traces of my ancestors: fears, strengths, mistakes. I understood that blood is only one part, the other is made of transmitted emotions, silent wounds. And it was there that I found the courage to accept myself, even in my fragile places. Some answers never came. Others were too broken to be rebuilt. But it was precisely in that void that I stopped judging. And I began to understand.

Because the unspoken truth is still the truth. And only by acknowledging it... can you profoundly move forward.

LOVE AND BONDS

Memory: Springboard or Ballast

Memory is a sharp blade: it can keep you chained or make you soar. For years, I experienced it as a burden of mistakes, pain, regrets. But over time, I understood remembering is not about suffering. It is about choosing how to start over.

Remembering means pausing only to gain momentum. It is a foundation, a fixed point, a voice that says, "You survived." And from there... you rebuild. I walked through that pain, I looked it in the face, and right there—where there seemed to be no light—I found strength.

Memory can sink you or lift you up. I chose the latter.

Mending the Present with Roots

Staying in the past or running away: these are two paths that lead to the same point. Neither will set you free. Only those who know how to integrate can truly live. I fought not to resemble the people who raised me. Then I fought not to completely deny them. Finally, I understood: my story cannot be erased. It is rewritten with what remains.

Building the future does not mean ignoring wounds. It means taking them in hand and saying, "Now I'm using you so I can never make any more mistakes."

My origins do not define me. But they explain it to me. And with that explanation... I can finally choose.

The Voices That Built Me

By delving into unspoken stories, I found what I had been missing: context, truth, humanity. Family silences were filled with untold dramas, handed-down wounds, truths kept silent out of shame or fear.

I searched for answers I found, some I did not. But in that void, I stopped demanding. And I began to understand.

My ancestors? Not just blood. They were beacons in dark times, mirrors reflecting who I am—even the traits I wanted to ignore.

Now they walk with me. Not as a burden, but as an invisible structure. I was also built from their fragilities. And this awareness has become my most stable strength.

Roots and Freedom

Identity is a balance between two opposing forces: roots that hold you, wings that demand flight. For a long time, I believed that to be free, you had to cut everything. But cutting your roots also means losing your momentum.

My journey has taught me that you do not fly away from what has shaped you: you fly through it. Accepting your past, even the painful one, is the only way to avoid being defined by it.

Being authentic is a daily task. It requires honesty, strength, and a constant recollection of oneself. Only in this way can we walk lightly: with our feet on the ground, and our gaze open to the sky.

Pain as Metamorphosis

Pain does not warn you. It has just come. It sinks into your bones, takes your breath away, changes your outlook.

My daughter's diagnosis. A sudden loss. Endless loneliness. Those were days when I could have collapsed—yet I chose to stay. Not out of heroism, but for survival.

Pain is not a test to be overcome. It is a harsh teacher who strips you of your illusions. If you go through it, it shapes you. It leaves you know. Wounded, yes. But true. I am not lying to you: I cried, I gave in, I lost pieces. But I did not break. I turned that suffering into a tough and honest strength, built with my bare hands.

Grief offers you only one real choice: let it break you or let it transform you. I chose the latter.

The Invisible Laws of Getting Up

Falling is a dull blow. You feel it everywhere. Lost jobs, shattered loves, silences as thick as walls.

Every time it seemed like the end. But it was not. Because it matters how you get up, not how many times you fall. I got up again. Always. Not out of heroism. Out of anger. Out of hunger for life.

Every fall has hollowed me out. Every rise has sculpted me. This is the law of those who never give up: the more you fall, the more you learn to breathe in the dust.

The Wrong Love

Sometimes what you call love is just hunger in disguise.

I was looking for someone to hold me up. She was looking for someone to save. We clung to each other to keep from sinking. But we were two broken rafts.

I have realized that love does not work. It vibrates. And if it does not vibrate... it is just needed with a mask.

Friendship Is Not an Illusion Between Two

I believed in loyalty. In staying. In "I'm here."

But not everyone understands friendship the same way. I was always there. They... only when needed. When the storm came, they disappeared.

I was left feeling empty. But also, a lesson: loyalty is not demanded. It is recognized.

A Woman and a Caress

The bottom has no sirens. It slips over you slowly, like the silence when you stop pretending everything is okay.

Psychiatry gave me labels and medications. But the fog remained. Until she arrived. She was not a therapist. She was not a doctor. She was a presence. Someone who did not ask for anything, who just stayed. And with her I learned to eat, to walk, to not be ashamed. To exist.

Salvation is not always in a pill. Sometimes... it is in caress.

I Was Afraid of Being Loved

It is easy to say, "I want to be loved." But it is another thing entirely to be able to hold that gaze.

For a long time, I longed for love, closeness, understanding. But as soon as someone got too close, I would tense up. I would change my tone. I would change the subject. I would move rooms.

Love scared me. Not because it was wrong. But because I did not know what to do with it.

I had learned to deal with abandonment, indifference, even contempt. But when someone stayed, did not demand anything, just listened... I did not know where to turn.

I hurt. I have avoided. I have sabotaged beautiful opportunities just to avoid being discovered.

The point was not whether I deserved love. The point was whether I could receive it without defending myself.

Then a woman came along who did not ask me anything. She did not ask me to change. Or to open.

He just looked at me. As if he knew everything. And had no intention of leaving.

I did not marry her. I did not stay there.

But I learned one thing from her: love, the good kind, not force. Wait. And she teaches you that true strength is not protecting yourself. It lets you be touched, even when you are trembling.

The Phrases I Missed Out of Afraid of Hearing Them

“I miss you.” “I’m sorry.” “I’m sick.” “I need you.”

All phrases I did not say. That I thought a hundred times, a thousand times. But that stopped somewhere between my throat and my heart.

Out of pride. Out of fear. Because I thought, "What's the difference now?"

But the unspoken words do not fade away. They remain there. Like pinpricks under the skin. Silent. And insistent.

I remember the time someone important said to me, “Do you have something to tell me?” I smiled, shrugged, and replied, “No, it’s fine.”

Lie.

My world was crumbling inside me. I wanted to tell her I woke up with her name in my head. That every good thing made me think of her. But I did not say it. And she left. Without looking back.

Since then, I have understood that silence is not always elegant. Sometimes it is fear. And that holding back authenticity is a form of self-betrayal. I now prefer the trembling voice, the awkward message, the wrong sentence but said, rather than an elegant and well- packaged regret.

The Steps I Chose to Take in My Own Shoes

My father wore shiny, wide, heavy shoes. He walked like someone who does not ask permission. Every step he took seemed to say, "I'm in charge here."

When I was little, I tried wearing them. I got lost in them. But for some reason... I tried them often. It was like wanting to be seen. To belong. To

become “right.”

Then, over the years, I realized that every choice I made professionally, emotional, identity-related, had that same shadow. I walked, yes. But with feet that could not feel the ground.

Until one day, at some point, sitting on the sofa, I put those shoes away.

I decided I did not want to walk in someone else's footsteps anymore.

I chose lightweight shoes. They do not make any noise, but they can feel the road.

And from that moment on, every step I took, even if uncertain, even if crooked—finally left a mark that belonged to me.

The Love I Didn't Want to Risk Anymore

I have only loved it once. The real one. And it broke inside me.

I have been closed since then. To protect myself. Not out of malice, but for survival. Those who knew me later knew it: I only gave half, with one foot always toward the exit.

Loving is a leap into the unknown. And I have stopped leaping. It is not surrender. It is defense.

The Right Story Lived, Wrong

We had everything. The same tastes, the same wounds, the same way of looking at the world with a half-smile and eyes full of hunger.

It seemed like the beginning of a well-written story. One of those that slip between your skin and time without needing permission.

The first few months were electricity. Conversations sparked on their own, we completed each other's sentences, we laughed as if life was finally synchronized.

But underneath, like a thin crack, something was growing. A discordance that could be felt even on good days. We did not argue

often, but even a silence that was a little too long was enough to make us feel distant. We constantly needed to reassure each other, to explain ourselves, to recover. As if love were a demanding profession. Then came the misunderstandings. Small, every day. Poorly said words, habits that hurt unintentionally. And love, true love, began to buckle under the weight of the lack of compatibility.

The hardest part was not breaking up. It was admitting we loved each other. But we were not meant to be together.

We were right... but in the wrong way.

There is not always a culprit. Sometimes love gets sick because it has its feet in different directions.

Today, when we think about it, I think we both feel a wistful smile. No anger. Just the awareness that certain stories have beauty that is not enough.

Sometimes you meet someone who awakens the best in you, but you cannot manage it. And you cannot protect it from them. And then the only true act of love left... is to let it go.

The Moment I Learned to Let Go

It was her first day in another city. Red suitcase, determined face, restrained emotion in her eyes. She looked at me and said, "Dad, don't come up with me."

I wanted to protect her. Accompany her. Carry her bags to her room, fix her window, check that the door was locked properly. But I said, "Okay." I smiled. Without too many teeth. Without too many words. I watched her climb the stairs. Her step was not trembling. She was ready. I was not.

I turned away. So, she would not see me. I breathed deeply so I would not cry in front of her.

In that moment, I understood that absolutely loving also means knowing how to let go. Not with indifference, but with trust.

She was no longer the little girl who fell off her bike and ran to me. She was a woman. A new life. A step that did not ask permission.

I sat in the car, started the engine... and stayed there. Thinking about the little gestures. The times I held her too tightly. Or too loosely.

Letting go of a child is not a one-time gesture. It is a slow process. It begins when they stop telling you everything. It continues when they stop reaching out to you for everything. It is complete when you watch them go... and you do not hold them back.

That day I did not lose my daughter. I recognized her freedom. And mine too.

When Love Ends

We loved each other. It was not a love movie. It was fresh, days, bills, arguments, desires. It was presence. And then, slowly, it began to fade. There was no betrayal. No great guilt. Just distance. Few "how are you?" s, many "everything's fine." The complicity was consumed in the details: sitting on the couch and not touching each other anymore. Talking... but only about things to do.

One day, at the dinner table, I said, “I see you, but I can't hear you anymore.” She nodded. Without anger. Without tears.

There was no drama that night. Just two human beings who understood that love... is not always a lifelong home.

But here is the truth: love, even when it ends, leaves a mark. You do not deny it. You do not insult it. You put in them the photos you do not throw away, the songs you do not change, certain phrases you still use without realizing it.

Today we are no longer connected. But if you ask me what happened, I will answer: true.

And the truth—sometimes—is not enough to keep us together. But it is enough to make us not regret having been there.

THE INNER FIRE

The hardest conflict is not with the world: it is within. Ambition versus duty. Approval versus truth. You look at yourself and ask, "What do I really want?" Answering requires fierce honesty. But from there... something changes. You accept yourself, imperfect, but whole. Internal wars never end. But you learn to navigate them.

And one day you discover that true peace is accepting who you are—even in the wrong places.

I thought I was of no use.

The darkest day is not the one when something happens to you. It is the one when nothing happens anymore. No calls. No plans. Not even an excuse to get out of bed.

That is when you realize you are not living; you are erasing yourself. But nothing contains a fixed point. Mine was: "Either I save myself, or I turn to ashes."

And I chose.

Success Is Made of Nights

Everyone sees the finish line. No one watches the steps. Success is a sum of mistakes, closed doors, sleepless nights. It is a muscle built through failures.

I never gave up. I was not the best prepared. But I was the one who stayed. And in the end, staying... becomes strength.

The Heart That Has Learned to Defend Itself

The women in my life have been mothers, lovers, teachers. They taught me to care. But also, pain.

Becoming a father? A merciless mirror. Each child is a lesson in love and truth.

In 2016, I chose love over a career. Then came the betrayal. And from there... awareness. I chose forgiveness, not for others— for myself.

True friendships last. Others drain you. And loving... is not enough. You need to know how to let go.

There is a love I have never forgotten. Young. Alive. Tattooed under my skin.

Today, I am no longer interested in being liked. I am interested in breathing without filters. Whoever catches me, does so with all the cracks. Whoever cannot manage it... stay out.

The Silence That Saved Me

In 2021, I gave up everything. A house in the mountains. No one around. Just me. The loneliness, at first, was burdensome. Then it became an ally.

Whole days spent breathing, reading, thinking. I have cleared away the noise. And I have understood being with you is a responsibility, not a punishment. From that solitude I returned with a truth: silence heals. And if you learn to listen to it... it changes you.

Anger as a Compass

I was always taught that anger should be contained. That it is dangerous, childish, and unproductive.

But anger saved me.

When I was young, a difficult family truth exploded in me. A lie held for years, a subtle betrayal. And I wanted to shatter it all.

I did not. I took that anger and built a business on it. A different life. Not because the anger was noble. But because it was real.

Anger is not something to be denied. It is something to be listened to. If you learn to feel it without letting it eat you up, it becomes a compass. It shows you where it hurts. And where do you still have something to change?

In the Head and Chest

You were always there. In every conversation I imagined. In solitary walks, in the empty spaces between commitments.

You inhabited my head like a silent roommate. You no longer hurt, but you did not go away either. I was right, I know. You chose to turn away at the worst possible moment. To deny me. To ignore everything we had been through. And I, instead of hating you, carried you inside. To show you—unbeknownst to me—that I was not like you.

But keeping you in my mind was like keeping a window open in the dead of winter. A constant current entered me. You kept me tense, even from afar.

Then, one morning, I opened my closet and found a sweatshirt you had given me. I took it. I smelled it. I folded it. And I gave it away.

It was not a symbolic gesture. It was real. It was the end of a recurring thought. The moment I took you out of my head... and out of my chest.

Not for revenge. For sanity.

Now if you come back to me, I will not tremble. I will let you pass like a distant train. Without ever boarding again.

Standing While Everything Collapsed

They were not quotes from famous books. Nor were they aphorisms from motivational posters.

They were words scribbled on post notes, lines marked in old notebooks, notes taken in the car while I waited to breathe again. “Don't chase the sleeping while you burn.” “If you do not know what to say, listen to the heartbeat. It does not lie.” “Be found where you've never been.”

Phrases born in moments when the noise of the world overwhelmed me. I was not looking for beauty: I was looking for anchors.

One evening, lying on the floor at home, unable to open my mouth to ask for help, I took a piece of paper and wrote: "Either I survive with what I have, or I am lost forever."

I did not know who I was looking for. But writing got me back on my feet. It told me, "Hey, you exist. Still."

I have never shared those sentences. I have deleted some, forgotten others, but in the worst moments... they come back. They appear like stubborn old friends. And they say, "You don't have to explain everything. You just have to stay."

Today I call them my guiding voices. Not because they knew where to go. But because they did not leave me alone as I fell.

People Better Than Me

I have met extraordinary people. Smarter. More honest. More generous. Some worked twice as hard as me. Others listened in a way that made everyone feel important. One, Marco, was a warehouse worker. He spoke little. But he could tell when a colleague was tired just by the way he bent his back.

I always told him, “You have something that people don’t immediately understand.” He smiled, apologetically.

Today, Marco has not made a career. He is stuck in the same job. He pays his installments as best he can. But his eyes are clean. And he laughs with a full throat.

There's also Lucia. A nurse who worked night shifts. She had a calm voice and gentle hands. The patients loved her. But she was left home during surgery. I saw her cry in the parking lot. Not out of anger. Because she said, "I'll miss them."

These people, and so many others, have not "made it" in the worldly sense. They do not have glittering LinkedIn profiles. They do not have books, awards, or visibility. But I know—I know for sure—that they are worth more than many magazine covers.

Because life is not fair. It is not a question of merit. It matters where you are born. Who reaches out to you? How many blows do you dodge? And how many you can take.

I have been lucky. Even talented. But: I have had moments when someone has said, "I'll take care of it." And they, those better than me, have not had that hand.

I will never forget this difference. It keeps me humble. It keeps me real.

The Day I Cooked Alone

It was Saturday. One of those gray ones, without promises. I canceled an outing. No one had contacted me. There was nothing I could do. I was about to order the usual pizza. Then, out of boredom or anger, I opened a recipe book.

I chose something simple: pasta with garlic, oil, and chili pepper.

I began preparing for it slowly. I sliced the garlic carefully. I heated the oil respectfully. I measured out the salt as if it were a cure-all. I put the water on, and for the first time in weeks, I listened to nothing. No music. No news. Just the sound of the water boiling.

I set the table. Just for me. With the best dish. The glass without splinters.

Sitting at the table, with that simple dish in front of him, something happened.

I felt seen. Bye.

There were no flowers. There was no company. But there was care. The same care I had always sought from outside.

And there I understood something no one had ever explained to me: Cooking for yourself is an act of love. The first. The most important. That dish was not perfect. But it was right.

Because, for the first time, I was not eating to fill up. I was nourishing something inside.

And since then, every time I cook... I know I am giving something back to those who have been patient with me: myself.

I Asked for Help — Really

I had always been able to manage myself. Everything. Commitments, emotions, even pain. I never cried in front of anyone. I did not talk about when I was hurting. I prefer to grit my teeth. Do. Solve. Hold on.

Until that day.

It was a winter evening. Work piled up, sleepless nights, relationships frayed. I was out of breath. Not figuratively: physically. I felt a weight on my chest. I was sitting in the car, in front of my house, unable to get out. Stuck.

I picked up the phone. I scrolled through the address book, not knowing what I was looking for. Then I clicked on a random name. Someone I had not heard from in months. And I simply said, "I need help."

Silence. Then a voice: “Tell me what I can do.” He did not judge me. He did not ask questions. He came. He sat with me. He brought me a beer. He did not try to fix me. He just... stayed. In that presence, something

gave way. Finally. The wall. The shame. The myth of self-sufficiency.

That night he did not save me. But he stopped my fall.

Since then, I have learned that asking for help is not a surrender. It is the clearest thing we can do. It is admitting we are not alone—and we should not pretend we are.

Asking for help is saying, “I do not want to hold it all alone anymore. Because holding on... is breaking me.”

And since that day, when someone calls me with a broken voice, I already know what to do. Do not offer solutions. Offer space.

The Void That Taught Me

It was not a specific sadness. It had no name, no shape. It was like a shadow that lengthened inside, even when the sun was shining.

For weeks I woke up with the feeling that something was missing. Not a person. Not a purpose. But something more subtle: meaning. The world moved on. But I... was stuck. I answered messages, I worked, I laughed. But inside there was emptiness.

At first, I tried to fill it. With dates, with series, with new commitments. But nothing worked. The emptiness remained. And then, one day, I stopped pushing it away. I listened to it. I asked myself: “What if this void was not the enemy? What if it was space?”

Space for silence. Space to hear what I had been silent for months. Space to say, "I miss you."

And in that emptiness, I rediscovered my hunger. Not the hunger to do. But the hunger to truly feel: the taste of food, the sound of the rain, my mother's voice on the phone, my body begging for respite.

That emptiness was an invitation.

To not live only for the sake of fulfillment. To not anesthetize yourself. To not always do something just to feel nothing.

And now, when he returns, I do not fear him. I welcome him as one welcomes a pause between two heartbeats.

Because it was in the void... that I found myself again. Not as I was before. But as I wanted to become.

REFLECTIONS FROM WITHIN

They build you as a child: strong, invincible, always impeccable. But every expectation is an invisible cage.

Breaking the mold is the most revolutionary thing you can do. Choose yourself. Your imperfections. Your path.

Live for yourself. Not for the gaze of others. And stay there.

Passion Never Leaves You

As a child, I wrote in silence. Not to show off, but to understand. Then a theme changed everything: a dream on paper, a teacher who saw it. From that day on... I never stopped.

Writing is not a job: it is my skin. It is where I am naked. And it is where every dream begins. Even when it fails.

Presence: The Silent Revolution

Stop. Observe. Write. Awareness does not come in flashes: it comes when you stop chasing.

My diary is still my refuge. I write to understand myself. To dust off my thoughts. To avoid living on automatic.

One day, in a park, I saw an old man petting a dog. They did not speak. They were just... there. I thought that is what matters.

Presence. Not as a technique. As a choice. This is my most spiritual act today. Do not run away from the moment. Breathe it.

Spirituality Without Masks

I was not looking for answers. I was looking for silence. I found it in an empty temple. Without words. Without miracles. And there I understood: life is not dominated; it is lived through. Then came esotericism: symbols, hidden languages, fragments of truth. Not magic. But transformation.

The spirituality I recognize today has no saints or dogmas. It is humility. Presence. And the courage to remain open to questions. Even when they hurt.

From Wound to Strength

It takes courage to say, "I'm hurting." To show the cracks. To take off your armor.

Vulnerability scared me for years. Then I realized: it is not weakness. It is the path to becoming real.

The light I found after the darkness did not come as salvation. It was born from trivial things: a gesture, a breath, a warm memory.

The truth? Light and darkness are not mutually exclusive. They pass through each other together. Only then can we truly learn to walk.

Learning From the Unexpected

Romance is not honey. It is knowing how to find enchantment amidst chaos. A star on a blanket, a phrase spoken softly.

The same goes for difference. I have traveled where my certainties have fallen. And I have learned that differences are not barriers: they are paths. The same goes for nature. A silent walk. The wind in my face. The earth beneath my feet. Everything brought me back to myself. Even the (real) mushroom poisoning. A tragicomic paradox. A call to the earth. A reassessment.

Because real life is what you did not expect. And if you learn to observe it... it teaches more than a thousand masters.

Reborn with scars on your body

Being reborn is not magic. It is slow, rough, daily practice. Do not forget the pain. You take it in hand, look at it, and give it meaning.

Wounds become living matters. Scars become maps. True resilience is not a gift: it is built. And being reborn is not the end. It is the beginning of a life where you no longer must pretend.

The Truth of the Present

The past teachers. The future scares. But only the present saves you. The mind is a jungle. Time slips by. And learning to stay here—truly here—is the only revolution possible.

Meditation, gratitude, the beauty of trivial things: a hot coffee, a slow breath, a wordless gaze. Peace does not just happen. It is cultivated. Within.

The Invisible Thread

Memories are seeds. Destiny is soil. Every event has a logic that you only understand piecemeal. Sometimes a phone call, a meeting, a dream stuck in someone's throat is all it takes.

That disabled boy, his messages, his hunger to run. I sent him a book. He did not know who I was. But there was a thread. And I understood that even small gestures convey the meaning of things.

Fate is not understood. It must be recognized, one fragment at a time.

The Battles That Are Not Fought

There are forces that cannot be confronted. Like that woman: magnetic, intelligent, predatory. I knew I would lose, not because I was weak—but because I did not want to destroy myself.

The real victory, sometimes, is saying no. Not out of cowardice. But out of common sense.

As a poker master once said: “Running away from danger is not cowardice. It is clarity.”

The Future Imagined (And Then Lived)

As a boy, I dreamed of a fulfilling life. True adventures, fulfilling relationships, goals achieved. Over time, those dreams took shape. And not because I was special. But because I never stopped believing in them.

Dreaming is an act of courage. And realizing it is an act of self-love. When I look back, I know I did not give up. And that made all the difference.

Hope and Resilience: The Double Root

There are moments when you are left with nothing. And in that nothing... something ignites.

Hope is not a sweet gift. It is a tough choice. It is getting back on your feet even without knowing how. It is saying, "yes again," even when everything says no.

Resilience is the sister of hope. It teaches you to walk on broken legs. To live without becoming an empty survivor.

Every blow has taught me. Every scar is there to remind me. Thank you, Pain. You have made me more real.

The Pages That No One Sees

Not everything is written. There are moments that remain outside of the stories, but inside... they construct everything.

Decisions made in silence. Defeats you did not tell anyone. Dreams changed along the way. These are the invisible pages that made me. And

looking at my life today, I am amazed: it is not what I imagined. It is more real. It is mine.

Choices as a Form of Life

Every choice is at a crossroads. Some save you. Others uproot you. I chose risk, not boredom. I chose to fail, not to stand still.

Every time I listened to fear... I lost. Every time I took the plunge... I came back new.

Choices are not decisions. They are territories. You inhabit them. You endure them. You love them. They build you piece by piece. And when you look back... you see who you are.

A Crazy Idea Changed My Career

It was not the right time. I had no time, no money, no contacts. But that idea woke me up at night. I felt it growing inside me, like a subtle fever that would not go away.

I had a secure job. A path already mapped out. But also, the feeling of being in a life that no longer resembled me.

One evening—tired, tense, drunk with silence—I said aloud to myself: “What if I gave up everything?”

I was scared. But the seed had been planted. Months passed. Every day seemed the same. But I was not anymore. I read, I studied, I called people, I made ridiculous mistakes. But that idea kept me awake in a unique way. It was not a whim. It was a question: "What if, for once, you really believed in yourself?"

Finally, I gave up. I left the desk. The badge. The check.

I opened a small business. Almost no one believed it. Not even me, at times. But on the first day, with zero customers and a hundred fears, something happened: I was alive.

Today I did not take a leap into the unknown. I took a leap into myself.

And it did not go well right away. But every mistake was mine. Every step... belonged to me.

A crazy idea may not change your life. But if you ignore it for too long... it ends up changing you inside.

The Choices You Make Just for Yourself

Certain choices no one understands. Staying alone when you can have company. Saying "no" to an offer everyone calls "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Not replying to a message. Moving cities without explanation. Getting a tattoo of a phrase that means home to you but is a drawing to others.

I have learned that the truly intimate choices are the ones you cannot fully explain. Not because they are secret. But because they do not need to be understood. They just resemble you.

I once chose not to take a job at a big company. The contract was excellent. The status was guaranteed. They told me, "You're crazy." Maybe so. But I had a knot in my stomach. That voice that said, "You'll get lost here."

I followed that voice. I had no plans. Only the certainty that I should not have stayed.

Today I think that's where consistency is measured: by the choices you make when no one is looking, when there is no applause, when you must stand on your own two feet — and you do.

Getting Lost Was the Only Way

It was not an unknown city. It was mine.

But that late afternoon, light rain, slow traffic, I took a different route, without thinking.

I walked, but aimlessly. Without haste. Without headphones. I realized I did not know where I was. No familiar signposts. No support.

For a moment, I was anxious. Then I slowed down. “Let's see where this takes me.” I slipped into an alley. Then another. I saw a tiny bookstore. A square I had never noticed before. A woman reading under a portico.

In that disorientation, something was reorganized within. Without an agenda. Without direction. Only presence.

And there I understood that, sometimes, the most honest way to find yourself... is to step outside of yourself.

Getting lost is not a lack. It is an opportunity.

And that day, inside that city I knew by heart, I saw a version of myself I did not know at all.

And that, since then, I have never forgotten.

The Teachings of Children

I have three children. And from each of them I have learned lessons no book could have taught me.

The first one taught me anger. The instinctive, disordered, visceral kind. We argued about everything. But then, he always said to me: "Dad, I'll only come back if you look me in the eye." And those eyes taught me the dignity of conflict.

The second one taught me silence. She was there, but she did not ask. She smiled, but I could tell something was not right. One day she said to me, "Don't worry if you don't understand. Just don't stop being there." From there, I learned to listen, which does not require answers.

The third was born in silence, with large, already tired eyes. He had a disability. And I was afraid. He taught me that normality is overrated, and love needs nothing to be worth it.

I deluded myself into thinking I was the father. But I was just the first student.

The Power of Changing Your Mind

I have spent half my life convinced that people never really change. Those gestures could be corrected. But never nature.

Then I happened to watch a man crumble and then be reborn. He was not a friend. He was not even someone I respected. He was just an acquaintance with a shaky reputation: arrogant, self-centered, distant.

But one day, I saw him differently. He was thinner and quieter. His eyes were dull. He had lost his son in a car accident. And since then, every certainty has been shattered.

I did not recognize him. He spoke softly. He asked, "How are you?" with genuine interest. One afternoon, after coffee, he said to me, "I was too judgmental. Talk to your son today, always. Even when you're angry." He was right. And since then, I have understood people do not change just because of pain, they change when something inside them stops being enough.

And if this is true for others, then it can be true for me too.

The Secret Corridor of My Memory

There is a place inside me that I have never shown to anyone.

A long, narrow corridor. The walls are lined with closed doors. Each door has a name. A face. A mistake. A person I never said goodbye to, never closed with. Or to whom I never said, "thank you."

I return there from time to time. On days when the silence is loudest, or when a song brings back the scent of an unresolved past.

I open the door. I see her again, the one who left me without explanation. I watch her. I do not speak to her. But I hear her. Once again, I open the door of my missing friend. A few unanswered messages, a distance that consumed us in silence. She is still there. He does not speak either. But he looks at me as if to say, "I was there."

That corridor is not a museum. It is not nostalgia. It is the place where I go to remember that every bond—even the broken one—has left me with something. I walk in silence. Then I close. There is no need to fix everything. But acknowledging... yes. Because nothing is overcome if you deny it. But everything softens... when you call it by name.

The Power of Small Choices

It is not the big events that change you. It is the tiny choice. That sentence you held back. That door you left closed. That "yes" you said wearily. Or that "no" you did not have the courage to say.

One day I let a phone call go by without answering. I did not feel like it. Too much effort, too much pressure. Two weeks later, that person disappeared from my life. Forever.

I do not know if it would have been effective. But since then, I have understood that life is made up of the most banal details. And you cannot go back and retouch them.

The Ending That Doesn't Feel Like an Ending

This chapter has no ending. It does not close. It does not explain. It does not save.

But it leaves an open question. An outstretched hand. A breath that cannot be written.

And that is okay. Because the best endings are not the ones that close things out. They are the ones that make you want to start over again.

The Legacy I Want to Leave

The future is not a prize. It is land to be cultivated. Not with fear. But with presence.

I do not want to leave behind accounts or trophies. I want to leave behind gestures. Looks. Words that teach. The seed of humanity.

Every action today is an invisible brick for those to come. And a better world is not promised. It is showing. In silence. With care.

THE RETURN HOME

At a certain point you stop. You look. You evaluate. You think back to the falls, the words spoken and those left unsaid.

“Did I get it all wrong?” “Maybe.” “But I lived.” And that matters.

Respect for oneself and others is not an accessory. It is the cornerstone of every dignified life.

And no, I am never wrong. Or at least that is what I like to believe, when night falls and my mind races sleeplessly.

Mirror and the Absence

I looked in the mirror and saw two eyes too alert for a tired body. My mother is behind me. Silent. Always. “Shut up, you look like your father.” And I thought: If I look like him, then I am in trouble.

Absence was everywhere: his, mine, that of those who wanted me to be there but had never heard my voice.

For years, I lived a life of reserve. I did my duty, yes, but inside, good anger burned. A drive. Everyone called me a visionary. The truth? I was just terrified of being forgotten.

Women and Shattered Identity

The women in my life have been earthquakes. No good times. But I was not looking for that. I wanted shocks. Revolutions. Looks that shattered masks.

I have loved many, badly. Without understanding. They taught me to stay, to run away, to break down. They told me truths I do not yet know whether to accept.

My mother was the first: silent, tireless, unrewarded. A rock. The others were mirrors. Not the ones that beautify. The ones that show you the wrinkles of the soul.

With one, I said yes to the law. But my heart, the law, does not follow it. Every woman has written a piece of my identity. And they had that pen, not me.

Genius, Madness

I have lived 45 years like a delayed train that never wants to stop. Every station has a departure. Every face has a mask. My wife thought I was suffering. In reality? I was cultivating conquest.

A woman every three days. A perfect cycle. First day: glances. Second: intimacy. Third: disappearance. Then Philadelphia. A doctor friend. Headache. Tests okay. But the pain remained. A doctor, lover and scientist, gave me a test: "pleasure696969." My DNA was activated only by a certain form of shared pleasure. Fifteen days in the clinic. Pampered, studied, idolized. Even lobster for dinner.

The university became legendary. The dean sent me home with a quip: "You got my daughter pregnant just by looking at me." I replied: "My sperm doesn’t work miracles. They fly business class."

Roots That Strengthen Each Other

For years I tried to escape the past. It felt like a chain, a limitation. But when I returned to my grandparents' village, I understood: those roots cannot be erased—they transform.

Resilience. Dignity. Good anger. They were all there, before me. Denial is useless. Knowledge is needed. Roots do not chain you. If you confront them, they arm you.

The Truths That Hurt

Youth deceive you. Then reality wakes you up. Innocence? You lose it with a kick. The truth—the naked truth—hurts. That is why many prefer well-told lies to uncomfortable truths. But if you do not look yourself in the face… you will remain a spectator of your own life.

Only when you accept who you are, even the wrong parts, can you begin too truly live. The truth does not punish you. It frees you.

The Best Stories

Boston, 2001. It is a very tough selection process. They wanted to evaluate me, to make me crumble.

Finally, they asked me, “Tell us the best story of your life.” I said, “This one. Today. Here with you.” And I explained why.

It is not them who judge me. It is me who wants to understand who they really are.

The Cure That Made Noise

There are times when you do not look for solutions, diagnoses, or strategies. You are looking for someone who will stay. Who will see you, without explaining? Who does not want to change anything? In my darkest descent—the slow, quiet one—I was surrounded by advice, remedies, approaches. All well-intentioned. Nonhelpful. Then she arrived. She was not a therapist. She was not a specialist. She was simply present. He did not ask me how I was. He did not insist I keep quiet. He made me food but let me choose when to sit at the table. One evening, in the kitchen, he placed his hand on my shoulder without saying anything. It was not a casual gesture. It was a declaration: "I'm not running away."

In that silence, a glimmer of hope opened. Not healing. Not yet. But a truce. A truce with myself.

Since then, I have understood that true healing does not always involve words. Sometimes it involves presence. And some people do not save you because they do something special... but because they decide you deserve to be seen even when you have nothing to offer.

Being Alone Has Put Me Back into The World

Solitude can be a prison. But also, a revelation.

I was tired of everything: the questions, the waiting, the explanations to those who would never completely understand. So, I packed up and left. A rented house. No Wi-Fi. No lists. Just me. The walls. And the intermittent sound of the fridge.

The first few days were tough. My head was racing; my heart was slow. I missed notifications just to feel like I was there. Then a different rhythm began. I woke up without an alarm. I cooked slowly. I looked out the window as if it were new. And slowly... I came to my senses. Solitude, when you choose it, is not isolation. It is immersion.

I wrote. I read. I cried without witnesses. And I understood that true companionship is not in the crowd. It is in the voice you hear when you learn to be with yourself. And if that voice does not scare you... then you are safe.

The Body Screamed Louder Than Me

I ignored the signs. Too much work. Too much pressure. I slept little. I ate poorly. I breathed with apnea, but efficiently. I was good. Until my body said enough. Not with sharp pain. With a collapse. I gave in piece by piece. One morning, my legs gave out. I looked healthy. But inside, I was at the limit.

I ended up in the emergency room. No obvious damage. But the doctor looked at me and said, “You are not sick. But you are not alive either.” That sentence struck me.

I stayed still for three weeks. Bed, silence, vague symptoms. And then I began to feel everything I had been avoiding real tiredness. Buried anger. Fear of emptiness.

The body does not betray you. Wait. Then it speaks. If you do not listen... it screams.

That crisis taught me that health is not about having illnesses. It is about having a rhythm. An inside that keeps pace with the outside. And if today I slow down, if today I say "no" without apology, it is thanks to that day when my exhausted body said what I could not find the courage to say.

Found Without a Screen in Front

It was an ordinary Tuesday. One of those where your phone is in charge even before you get your coffee. Except that day... I left it at home. Not even by conscious choice. A minor distraction.

My first reaction was anxiety. How would I manage without GPS, messages, reminders, music? Then, however, something new happened. Or something ancient.

I looked out the window. Not to pass the time, but to be there. The people on the tram seemed different. Not silhouettes but faces. I entered a café and noticed the voice of the person serving coffee. The tone. The inflection. The tired, gentle gesture.

At the market, I picked up an orange, just to feel its weight. And when I walked through the park, I did not take photos. I sat down. I breathed. I watched a mother talk to her son, unhurried. Without notification.

That evening, when I got home, I wanted to pick up my phone again. But not to update myself. Just to say, "I was alive today."

The Subversive Art of Staying Human

We live in a cult of exceptionalism. The best. The fastest. The brightest. But one day, in line at the post office, I saw a scene that took my breath away.

A woman helped her husband, trembling slightly. She adjusted his scarf. She smiled at him as he tried to sign a form with uncertain fingers. No one looked at them. No one celebrated them. And yet, I saw immensity in them. Their daily fidelity. Their stay.

They told us we must make our mark. That we must emerge, run, reinvent ourselves. But the most rebellious act today is to remain present. Whole. Faithful to our own voice, even without making noise.

I have stopped wanting to be amazed. I want to recognize and cherish the value of a caress given without witnesses. Of a consistency maintained for thirty years without a social media page.

Being normal, today... is the new heroism.

Disappear to Find Yourself Whole

It was a choice. Not a breakdown. Not an escape. I was talking too much. To too many people. About things that no longer nourished me. So, I turned everything off. Turned off notifications. No explanation. Three days of silence. No posts. No replies. No trace.

At first, the emptiness unsettled me. Who was I if no one saw me?

Then I began to feel the air, the noises of the refrigerator, the water in the moka pot. Time was no longer an enemy to be controlled. It was a place to be inhabited.

In that silence I encountered a gaze in the mirror that seemed less tired, less needy.

There is nothing mystical about disappearing. It is maintenance. It is silencing the world so your voice can be heard.

Disappearing, sometimes, is the first act of presence towards oneself.

Actions, Not Talk

Young people today are growing up fast. But roots still matter. My grandparents used to say: before you trust, look where it comes from.

Cultural differences cannot be erased, and those who do not know them... pay. Life is a constant selection. And I have learned not to explain myself too much. To let the facts speak for themselves.

Because in the end... facts never lie.

Life Between Corridors and Scars

I have never been to prison. But hospitals... those, yes. Eight surgeries. One after another. The pain, the fear, the waiting.

Yet, from those cold rooms I learned something profound: every day without pain is a gift. Not a right.

The real heroes? The nurses who talk to you when you cannot even cry. The doctors who care not just for the body, but for the soul. And the roommates: strangers who remind you how fragile we are—and how human.

The Dignity of Those Who Have Little

Poverty is not just a lack of money. It is a widespread lack of healthcare, education, and opportunity. But it is not always a matter of sadness.

I have known poor people with more strength than any manager. People who laughed at little, who were not envious, who knew how to share. Women, in poverty, bring a different kind of fire: they fight, they keep homes afloat, they defend love even when they lack certainty.

The poor teach the rich what truly matters. And that value cannot be bought. Nor can it be faked.

The Art of Understanding People

After forty years in the world, I have come to understand: nobody gives you anything for free. And understanding others is an art.

There are those who never change. Those who live within their ego. Those who ask questions, but do not listen. Women? Different. Some are closed-minded. Others lucid, even too much so. Foreign women are polite. Italian women... a complexity that challenges.

I do not judge. I observe. Because behind every mask, every makeup, every angry, there is always a story. Understanding others is like touching the truth: if you learn to do so, it becomes a gentle weapon.

Kindness Never Forgotten

It was a moment. A bus stop. I was late, tired, and nervous. It was cold. It was raining. I had just received sad news: a project was rejected, weeks were wasted. I had my head down, immersed in my bad mood, when someone approached. An elderly lady, wearing a blue cloak, with small, lively eyes, asked me, "Are you waiting for 37?" I nodded, distracted. "It'll be a while," she said. "It's raining hard here. Would you like some of my umbrella?"

It was not a polite question. It was a firm proposition. And it made me look up.

We shared that small space under the light plastic. We hardly spoke. Just a few words about the traffic. Then the bus arrived. I got on through one door, she through another. I never saw her again.

But that scene has stayed with me ever since. Because it was kindness without reason, without expectation, without return. Such a simple gesture... and so rare.

He taught me something I have never forgotten kindness is not weakness. It is presence. It is saying, "I see you, even if I don't know you." It says, "You don't have to deserve anything to receive something."

Today, when I can, I do the same. A shared umbrella. A hand on a suitcase. A warm word. And every time, that lady is there. In the rain. With her blue cape. Reminding me that the world is still held together—thanks to those who choose to be human.

The House That Is No Longer There

There was a room with warm, yellow light. A round table. A moka pot that whistles on Sundays. That was home. Then the parents die. The siblings fight. The children grow up. And that house is no more.

You sell it. It disappears. One day you happen to pass by. The light is off. The garden is overgrown. A different smell. Other voices.

You want to play. But you do not.

That day I realized that some losses should not be processed. They should be left there. Like photographs you do not develop. But you carry them in your wallet.

When I Lied Well

Lying is not always cowardice. Sometimes it is protection. Sometimes it is the only way to avoid hurt. I lied to my mother when they told her there would not be another Christmas. I said, "We're planning a trip." Her eyes lit up. She did not say anything.

He died two weeks later, with that light in his eyes. And I stopped wondering if I had done the right thing. Because sometimes a lie told from the heart... is worth more than a thousand surgical truths.

The Smell of Fatigue

No one prepares you for the sweat of real work. The kind that sticks to your skin, gets under your nails, and wears you down. I knew it as a boy: warehouse, crates, vans. The pay that was not enough, a weariness that did not require permission.

But in those days, I learned humility. And every time I come home tired today—as a manager, as a man—I smell my wrists. And if I still smell the fatigue... I know I have not lost my way.

That Day I Laughed for No Reason

It was raining, the world was awful, I had lost a contract. And yet, in the middle of the street, near a stall selling chestnuts, an old lady looked at me and said, "What a funny nose you have." I laughed. I laughed heartily. For no reason.

It was not irony. It was lightheartedness. Laughter—without explanation, without permission—is the most subversive act we have. That day I understood that not everything needs to be understood. Some things simply need to be experienced. And that is it.

The Art of Forgetting

Forgetting is not a loss. It is a decision.

I stopped remembering certain insults, certain mistakes, certain toxic conversations. Not out of weakness. But because remembering them took away my light.

The deepest forgiveness is the one you do not have to tell anyone about. You do it. You carry it. And you start walking again.

Time, Pain, Loss

Time does not wait. It is not measured in days. But in wounds. And how do you carry them?

I lost. I loved it. I broke. Grief does not ask permission. It crushes you. But it also shows you what remains standing when everything falls apart.

Loss has taught me to find strength in the void. To shed light in the darkness. Fragility is not a defeat. It is what makes us human.

The Losers' Lesson

One day I lost badly in a karate tournament. I had the belt, the preparation, the arrogance.

A kid with a limp beat me. He was technical, calm. He only looked me in the eye.

Finally, he told me, “I only train my fears.” It took me by surprise.

The strong do not always win. Often, those who know their own weakness do as a master do.

I Cut My Hair

They were long. Part of me. Part of my pride. One day I took the scissors and cut them off. Suddenly. No trauma. No forced changes. Just the desire to see who I was without those threads that had been telling me for years.

Sometimes it takes a clear gesture to break out of a narrative. To say, "This was me. But I'm not anymore."

The Missed Phone Call

It was his birthday. I had saved his number, even though we had not spoken in months. We had argued over something stupid. Two strong personalities, two opposite ways of saying "you're hurting me."

That morning, I picked up the phone. I looked at it. I scrolled down to that name. But I did not call.

I thought, “It won’t be the right time.” But the right time, often, is exactly that —the time when you feel something inside your moving.

Two days later I received a message: “I wanted to hear from you. It does not matter.”

I did not reply. And that message has remained there ever since. Witness to all the times when silence seems prudent, but it is just fear.

If I could go back, I would make that call. But time does not grant second chances. Only memories to learn from.

The Mistake I Never Forget

He was a colleague. He had made a mistake. He had derailed a project we had been working on for weeks. I was the boss. I yelled at him. In front of everyone.

It was not just anger. It was humiliation. The kind that stays with you.

He did not say anything. He took his documents back. And left.

He never returned. Not to the office, nor into our lives. Years later, I saw him again by chance. We said a cold goodbye. I had rehearsed a sentence, an excuse, something, a thousand times. But nothing came out.

That mistake is not his. It is mine. Not for losing a colleague. But to forget that even those who make mistakes... deserve respect.

Since then, before raising my voice, I ask myself: “Do I still want to have this person in my life tomorrow?”

The Night I Said Yes

I had been invited to dinner. I did not feel like it. It was cold, I was tired, my head was full of thoughts. I had a thousand reasons not to go. But I said, "Yes."

Sitting next to me was a man I had never met before. Calm, with a soft smile. We chatted about this and that. Then, suddenly, he said to me, "I started living again at seventy. After my third heart attack." He was not looking for attention. Just sharing.

That evening, he told me something that I still carry with me: “When you say no to life too many times, it stops knocking.”

Since then, I have tried to say yes. Not out of politeness. Out of expansion.

Because every small, unexpected “yes” is a door that opens a room you did not know existed.

Narrative Aphorisms

Fragments that do not explain. But reveal.

1. “Masks do not protect. They hide. And eventually... they suffocate.”

2. “Pain is not an enemy. It is a teacher who does not know how to smile.”

3. “Truly loving is letting go. Even when you want to hold on tight.”

4. "Solitude is not emptiness. It is a sacred space for those who have the courage to listen to themselves."

5. “Every silence has a voice. You just must stay long enough to hear it.”

6. “The truth does not save. But it liberates.”

7. “Writing is not storytelling. It is survival.”

8. “Roots are not chains. They are maps. It is up to you to decide where they lead.”

9. “The body speaks. Always. Even when the mind is silent.”

10. “Don't look for someone who understands you. Look for someone who recognizes you.”