

I am Fine

At the moment, when I am writing this piece, I am fine. I have worked on this piece of art, *I am Fine*, in which I have written the words “I,” “am,” and “fine” numerous times. If you have noticed, I have changed the statement “I am Fine” to “Am I Fine,” halfway through, questioning my state of being, my sanity, and my mental health. I drew inspiration based on how I have been conditioned by society to ask a personal question, “How are you,” followed by answering “I am fine.” Some choose to speak their minds, while others intentionally dodge the question, and fake their appearance. I often find myself not being able to validate one’s answer to the statement, I instead treat it as a filler statement for the sake of being courteous. For a society to ask such questions is a step in the right direction, but what is the point if such questions are undermined most of the time? Do we, as a society, really take the time and effort in putting meaning to these “How are you” questions? Why do we ask such an arbitrary question that has no intent to it? How come is it so difficult to be genuine with our feeling and thoughts, and share them with others?

The day-to-day hustle and bustle might challenge us to take the time to mean it when we say, “How are you?” We simply do not have the time and energy to become who we are by nature. Our social skills have plummeted due to the rise of human advancements. We invest ourselves into our work, our lives, and our world so much so that we have lost sight of others around us and are unable to form connections. Without social skills, we are unable to make the effort of making authentic human connections. This is why society encourages us to socialize, form bonds, make friendships, etc. How much of that socializing is genuine? Are we connecting because we must, or we are doing it because we are supposed to? On top of that, today’s Institutes and organizations are willing to give up human connections for their company profit.

They demand progress by making us work tirelessly and around the clock. After all that, what time does it leave for us to participate socially? This much time working ourselves away affects how much we give meaning to a “how are you” question. Or how we answer by mindlessly saying “I am Fine.” We are tired, we are stressed, and we are depleted of our energy to be real with ourselves. To say that we are not fine, that we could be happy, but we are not.

It’s difficult to become vulnerable in front of strangers, so in response to such a mundane question, we often say that we are “fine” or “good.” These answers are nothing more than a word of validation for the questioner. Moreover, saying “fine” does not reveal too much about the person’s state of being. It’s a shallow act of hiding oneself from their true emotions, it also leaves the explanation too. Being truthful to the question puts unnecessary stress on how much truth to say. Plus, it might not be their business to handle emotional adversity. It also makes it look like the person answering the question feels as if they might be burdening the questioner with their truth. It is reasonable to assume that the question itself stands to acknowledge the person’s feelings even if it is meant or not. And answering, “it’s all good,” validating the questioner, even if it’s not true. Being open is like being vulnerable, and being vulnerable is scary.

My work on the piece, *I am Fine*, was supposed to resemble how we lose sight of our own emotions when no one is truly asking or truly answering the question. We, as a society, are slowly losing our humanity to other priorities that drain our energy. Although nothing much we can do about it, we still need to pay bills. In a way, are losing the purpose and meaning of the question itself. By not giving much effort into the question we lose its purpose too. And while we don’t mean what we ask, we don’t even tell the truth about how we truly feel in fear of opening up to our true feelings in front of strangers. In the foggiest of the two worlds, we sometimes lose the meaning of our feelings. We lose sight of knowing if ‘we are fine’ or ‘are we

fine.’ Let us set aside and unlearn the western nature of society, where people don’t have the time or energy to mean what they ask, but rather learn to make an effort to truly mean when we ask, “How are you?”