

# Stop Saying “I’m Fine”

## What to Say Instead (When You’re Not Okay)

*A neuroscience-backed mini guide  
for women who are done pretending they’re okay.*



By Dr. Renea Skelton  
Certified Life & Communication Coach, Founder of RealWomen Connect™



# HI, I'M DR. RENEAL!

I'm a retired Air Force veteran, spouse of a veteran, a life and communication coach - and a woman who has said **"I'm fine"** way too many times when I was anything but.

If you've ever...

- Smiled and said *"I'm good"* while your insides were screaming,
- Bit your tongue because you didn't want to be *"too much,"*
- Or told yourself to shake it off when your heart was still heavy...

...then you're *my kind* of woman.

Here's the truth- saying **"I'm fine"** doesn't make you strong. It makes you silent. And over time, silence convinces your brain that your honesty isn't welcome.

This isn't one of those fluffy feel-good printables. It's a quick, real-life guide to help you speak up without guilt, without drama, and without the need to fix everything.

Inside, you'll find the **phrases, brain hacks, and reminders** that actually work in real conversations - the messy, "I-don't-have-time-for-self-care-right-now" kind of conversations.

And if you're ready to take it deeper, that's exactly why I built **RealWomen Connect™** - space for women who are done pretending they're fine.

But first - let's rewrite that script together.

  
Dr. Reneal



## WHY WE KEEP SAYING “I’M FINE”

We all do it.

We say **“I’m fine”** because it feels safer than being honest. Safer than risking judgment. Safer than hearing, *“You’re overreacting.”*

It’s not about avoiding the truth - it’s about protection. Your brain is wired for safety, not vulnerability, and sometimes silence feels like the only way to stay in control.

But here’s what happens: your body still keeps score. Your chest tightens, your energy dips, and that ache behind your **“I’m fine”** grows heavier. You look calm, but your nervous system is screaming, *“Please, let me be seen.”*

That’s why small, honest shifts matter. Every time you choose truth over protection, your brain learns that honesty is safe. The fear center quiets down, and the clear-thinking part turns back on.

This isn’t about oversharing - it’s about giving your truth a voice. Because every time you do, you take your power back.

And when you start speaking what’s real, you don’t just communicate better - you feel better.

On the next page, you’ll find **real phrases** that help you bridge the gap between silence and honesty. They’re simple, doable, and they actually work in real conversations - the messy, human kind.



## WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

Let's be real - these aren't fluffy affirmations. They're phrases that help you tell the truth without oversharing or feeling like you have to hold it all in.

When you're done saying **"I'm fine,"** use these to stay grounded, honest, and human. Honesty doesn't have to be dramatic - it just has to be real.

When You Want to Say...	Try Saying This Instead...
"I'm fine."	"I'm figuring out how I feel, but thanks for asking."
"I'm just tired."	"My body's tired because my mind's been carrying a lot."
"It's nothing."	"It feels small, but it's still heavy right now."
"I'm okay."	"I'm managing, but I'm not all the way there yet."
"It doesn't matter."	"It matters to me, and I'm learning to honor that."
"I'll handle it."	"I'm used to doing things alone - but I could use some support."
"I'm just being emotional."	"These emotions are information - they're trying to tell me something."
"I'll get over it."	"I'm giving myself time to process before I move on."
"Others have it worse."	"Pain isn't a competition - mine still deserves care."

💛 **You don't owe anyone perfection - you owe yourself honesty.**



## WHY THIS WORKS

Your brain isn't trying to lie when it says **"I'm fine."**  
It's trying to protect you.

When you sense tension, discomfort, or possible rejection, your **amygdala** - the brain's built-in alarm system - fires up. It's the part that says, *"Play it safe. Keep the peace."* That's why you default to silence, change the subject, or downplay what's really going on.

But when you use honest, grounded language instead of brushing things off, your brain gets a new message: *"I'm safe enough to be real."*  
That's when your **prefrontal cortex** - the part that helps you think clearly and stay calm - steps back in.

It's a subtle shift with a big impact. You stop reacting from fear and start responding from **truth**. Over time, your nervous system learns that you can handle being seen, even in the messy moments.

This is how emotional honesty rewires your brain - one real conversation at a time.

Every time you tell the truth about how you feel, you're teaching your brain that safety and honesty can coexist.



## FROM DR. RENEA

You don't need permission to take up space.

You don't need a crisis to be honest.

You only need a reminder that your voice matters - and this is it.

The next time you catch yourself saying **"I'm fine,"** pause for a second.  
Take a breath.

And ask yourself what's actually true for you in that moment.

That's where connection starts - with yourself first.

That's what I built **RealWomen Connect™** for.

It's a women-only community where you can talk about life, leadership, business, and the messy middle without pretending you've got it all figured out.

It's the space where honesty isn't punished - it's celebrated.

If you're ready to take this deeper and practice emotional honesty in real conversations, you'll fit right in.



Join RealWomen Connect™  
for your FREE month



Because you don't have to be **"fine"** anymore.

You only have to be real.

  
Dr. Renée

Certified Life & Communication Coach  
Founder, RealWomen Connect™



## ABOUT DR. RENEA

Dr. Renea Skelton is a Certified Life & Communication Coach, retired Air Force veteran, and award-winning children's book author. She's also one of only five True Colors® Master Trainers in the world - which means she's spent over 20 years helping women, leaders, and communities strengthen communication, build emotional resilience, and create connection that actually lasts.

Her work isn't about theory. Everything she teaches comes from lived experience - the same tools she's used in her own life to quiet her inner critic, reset relationships, and navigate the messy seasons.

She created **RealWomen Connect™** because women don't need more "fix yourself" advice. We need real conversations, real friendships, and real support.

👉 Learn more at [ReneaSkelton.com](https://ReneaSkelton.com)



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