

Recent Ramblings: Surface Missiles

On the way home from a baseball tournament- just Trajan and me for a change of pace- I asked him how his girlfriend is doing.

“She’s good.”

“Well, tell her we miss her and I said HI.”

“I will. I just hate all of the questions...”

“What questions?”

“About her from other people. ‘Why did she move away? Where did she go? When will she be back?’”

“Aha.”

“I don’t want to get into it, so I just say, ‘It’s a long story,’ then they say, ‘I’ve got time!’ And I don’t want to talk about it.”

“What you’re going to realize is this is just the first in a long line of life questions that can be difficult to handle...”

We all do it. It starts in high school. Longing for those next life stages, living vicariously through others, and comparing our own circumstances to those around us. Wanting to know more, we ask questions. Most people don’t mind being asked questions. To the untrained ear, they appear to be just questions. But to those of us with scars, we know better; they’re unmanned surface missiles.

It starts out innocent. It always does. Some1 is dating Some2. We’re stuck in the lunch line behind Some1 and to fill the awkward silence or maybe to try to gain a friend, the question is asked:

“How’s Some2?” or, “How long have you been seeing Some2?”

Innocent.

Conversation ensues and, 99 times out of 100, that experience will be a positive one. Encouraged by these events, we continue with this line of questioning with Some1 and others. As we get older, the topics change:

“You’ve been with Some2 for a while now; when are you going to pop the question?” Or the female-to-female version, “When’s he going to ask you??”

“OOO! Let me see the ring!! When are you guys getting married?”

“When are you guys going to have kids?”

“What names do you have picked out? Do you know? Boy or girl?”

“When are you going to have another kid?”

Again, to the untrained ear, these are just questions. But the scars I'm talking about are in reference to life's speed bumps. The unplanned events and complications that haunt many of us. **All of us, eventually.**

Some2 breaks up with Some1. First love. Innocent question to Some1 about Some2. Ugh. Detonation. The day sinks.

Can't get pregnant.

Miscarriage.

Losing a child.

Losing a job.

Marriage ends.

Wayward children.

Death of those closest to us.

Illness. Injury. Mental health issues.

It can get to a point where "How are you?" answered honestly becomes too much.

Typically, we end up doing 1 of 2 things; either we learn to lie, or we just **don't**. We don't want to answer the questions so we **don't** call home. We **avoid** people. We **don't** visit. We **don't** engage. We **don't** make eye contact. We **don't** speak because we don't want to raise any more questions that we don't want to answer. So we just don't.

This is what I know:

*Lying isn't the answer. Don't lie.

*Seek out those who know you and would understand. Not everyone who knows you would understand.

*Don't hurt others with your own hurt.

*When it's not so raw, share your pain. Pain is relatable. Maybe your story could help someone else. There's perspective in standing outside the pain after having been in it.

*Perspective will be ongoing, but healing begins when you can find something- anything- positive in it.

*OR for the smaller surface missiles... Back in the vehicle on the way home from the baseball tournament:

"Hey, Traj?" I turned down Everclear's "Santa Monica" for a moment.

"Yeah?"

"Any questions you don't want to answer, divert the topic of conversation. If you do it well, it'll be 3 whole days before they think back on it and decide, 'hey, I never got an answer to my question...'"

Countermeasures deployed. Crisis averted.