

humync

A GUIDE TO SPEAKING UP AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

THE SILENT RESIGNATION

When speaking up stops
feeling worthwhile.

Understand what feels wrong.
Find the words.
Decide your next step.

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Founder, Humync | Employee edition 2026

The third time, Sam says nothing.

The first time, Sam asks about progression at the end of a one-to-one. Their manager says it is a good question and promises to find out. Sam leaves with a little more energy than they arrived with.

The second time, Sam brings it up again. There is a deadline that week. “Let’s get through this first,” the manager says. Sam understands. Everyone is stretched.

Before the third meeting, Sam types “progression” into their notes. Then deletes it. They talk about the project instead. When asked how things are going, they say, “Fine.”

The work still gets done. The question has not gone away. Sam has simply stopped expecting an answer.

DOES ANY PART FEEL FAMILIAR?

Perhaps it was a question about your future. Perhaps a workload you could not sustain, an idea nobody returned to, or a decision you never understood. What did you want someone to come back to you about?

Sam is fictional. This scene illustrates one possible experience, not a way to infer what a quiet colleague feels. Your experience may be different.

For the person who said, “I’m fine.”

You can care about your work and still need something to change.

You might have rehearsed the conversation on your way to work, then said nothing when the chance came. Or work might be mostly good, apart from one thing you cannot seem to get an answer about.

I wrote the original edition for founders. This time, I wanted to start with the person trying to find the words. What would help you explain what you need, and find out what happened after you asked?

You do not have to decide today whether to stay or leave. You can use these pages privately, skip what does not fit and take your time. Start with the thing that keeps coming back to you.

A PROMISE TO THE READER

You know more about your experience than a checklist can. These pages offer questions and words to borrow. They will not score your commitment or tell you how you should feel.

Start wherever you need. The contents page links to each section. Tap **BACK TO CONTENTS** at the foot of a page to return.

Start where you are.

Tap a section below. You can also use the PDF bookmarks.

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The worksheets on pages 10, 16 and 20 can be typed into in a compatible PDF reader, or printed. Save your own copy and keep it somewhere appropriate for its contents.

When “what’s the point?” replaces a question

You think of an improvement, then leave it unsaid. You remember a question about progression and decide not to ask again. You finish the work, but feel unsure whether anyone wants to hear how the work could be better.

If that sounds familiar, it is worth making room for it. You might still care deeply about the work. You might simply be tired of asking.

WHAT THE TITLE MEANS

“The silent resignation” is the phrase used in this guide for withdrawing from speaking up when it no longer feels worthwhile. It is not a clinical diagnosis, a validated score or a prediction that someone will leave.

What it does not mean

Working your agreed hours is not evidence of disloyalty. Being quiet, turning off a camera or replying later cannot tell another person what you feel. A single difficult week does not explain your whole relationship with work.

Someone else might think you seem fine. You’re still allowed to say that something isn’t working for you. Start with what happened and what you wish were different.

A question worth returning to

A continuation of the fictional opening.

Sam has stopped asking about progression, but still wants an answer. Before the next meeting, they decide to put the question in writing. It feels awkward to raise it again. Leaving it unspoken has not made it matter less.

The turning point can be small

Sam writes: “Could we return to my question about progression? I’m still unclear about the criteria. Could we agree who will find out and when we can review them?”

This time, the manager says, “You’re right. I said I’d come back to you, and I haven’t.” They agree to find the criteria and set a date to talk. Sam still has no promise of promotion, but knows what to expect next.

WHAT CHANGED?

Sam knows who is finding the answer and when they will talk again. Whether that promise is kept still matters. For now, there is something concrete to come back to.

What are you carrying into work?

Fictional examples for reflection, not warning signs to apply to other people.

FEELING OVERLOOKED

Leah is left out of a project discussion after contributing to the brief. She asks: “What would I need to do to be considered next time?”

INCONSISTENT EXPECTATIONS

Amir is asked to take initiative, then criticised for deciding without approval. He asks: “Which decisions can I make, and which need a check first?”

CHANGE WITHOUT AN EXPLANATION

A new rota changes Jo’s working pattern without an explanation. Jo asks: “Can you explain the decision and what is still open for discussion?”

It does not have to be one big incident. Sometimes it is the same small thing happening again. Choose the part that matters to you, even if you are still working out why.

“I’m unhappy” is a starting point

You can start with “I’m not sure how to explain this.”

When something hurts, the event and the explanation can feel like the same thing. Writing them down separately may help you see what you know and what you still need to ask.

What happened?

“My priorities changed three times this week” is an observation. “Nobody respects my time” is an interpretation. Start with the observation so the conversation has something concrete to address.

What is the effect?

What does it mean for your day? You might be redoing work, missing breaks or going home frustrated. Use your own words and share only the detail you want to.

What might help?

A clearer priority list? An explanation of a decision? A workload review? Time to learn? If you do not know, asking to explore options is a reasonable request.

TRY THIS PRIVATELY

The part of work I most want to change is...

One recent example is...

The effect on me or my work is...

A useful first step might be...

From a feeling to a request

Fictional example: Leah, who felt overlooked in a project discussion.

One recent situation

"I contributed to the project brief last month. I was not invited to the meeting about the next stage."

The effect on me or my work

"I felt overlooked, and I am now unsure whether I should keep contributing ideas or focus only on my assigned tasks."

What I know, and what I am assuming

"I know I was not invited. I do not know how the group was chosen. I am assuming my contribution was not valued, but I have not checked that."

What I want to ask

"How was the group selected? I would like to contribute to the next stage. What would make that possible?"

What I am comfortable sharing

"I want to discuss the invitation and my future involvement with my manager. I do not want this turned into a team discussion about my feelings."

Leah is still upset. The worksheet has helped her find a question she can ask without pretending she already knows the answer.

What I want to put into words

Type into the boxes or print this page. Keep it for yourself unless you choose to share it.

One recent situation, described plainly:

The effect it had on me or my work:

What I know, and what I am still assuming:

What I would like to ask for or understand:

What I am comfortable sharing, and with whom:

Save a copy after typing. If your PDF viewer does not support forms, use a separate note. These fields do not submit your answers to Humync.

You get to choose how to begin

You might find it easier to write first. You might want a quiet meeting, or someone with you. Give yourself a setting where you have time to explain and someone able to respond.

Ask for a specific conversation

“Could we set aside some time to discuss workload and priorities? I’d like to agree what is realistic for this week.” This tells the other person what the conversation is for without requiring your whole story in the first message.

Think about who should hear it

Your manager may be the right person for a routine work issue. If the concern involves them, consider another appropriate route available to you, such as HR, a trusted senior colleague or a union representative.

Check the boundaries

Before sharing something sensitive, ask who will see it, what may need to be passed on and how it will be handled. Do not assume a work message, form or survey is private or anonymous.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FORCE THIS ROUTE

If speaking directly feels unsafe, seek support before proceeding. This guide is for everyday workplace conversations; it does not replace formal reporting routes or specialist advice about serious concerns.

A conversation you can make your own

Choose one issue. You can come back to the others.

OPEN THE CONVERSATION

"I'd like to talk about something that has been affecting my experience at work. I want to explain it clearly and discuss what might help."

Describe the situation

"Over the last two weeks, I've received urgent requests from three people, each with a different priority."

Explain the effect

"I'm finding it difficult to know what to finish first, and some work has had to be redone."

Make a request

"Could we agree one priority order and who can change it?"

Agree the follow-up

"What can we decide now? Who will handle anything outstanding, and when should we check back?"

These examples are fictional. Borrow the words that sound like you. If you lose your thread, it is fine to look at your notes and say, "There's one thing I wanted to come back to."

You can be clear without having every answer

WHEN THE ISSUE IS PROGRESSION

"I'd like to understand the expectations for the next level. Could we review the criteria and agree where I should focus?"

WHEN THE WORKLOAD FEELS UNMANAGEABLE

"With the time available, I can complete A or B by Friday. Which should take priority, and what should move?"

WHEN AN EARLIER CONCERN DISAPPEARED

"I raised this previously and I'm not sure where it stands. Could you update me, including if a decision is still pending?"

WHEN THE ANSWER IS NO

"Thank you for explaining the decision. Can we discuss what is possible instead, and whether anything would trigger a review?"

Adapt these examples to what actually happened. The aim is a clearer conversation, not a guarantee that another person will respond well.

Keep hold of the point.

“EVERYONE IS BUSY.”

“I understand there is pressure across the team. My concern is that A and B cannot both be completed in the time available. Which should take priority?”

“WE ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS.”

“We did, and I appreciate that. I’m raising it again because I still don’t know what was decided. Could we clarify where it stands?”

“LEAVE IT WITH ME.”

“Thank you. When would be a realistic time for an update, even if the decision is still pending?”

“YOU ARE BEING NEGATIVE.”

“I’m trying to explain a specific difficulty and find a workable next step. Could we return to the example I raised?”

You do not have to keep explaining yourself in a conversation that feels unsafe or demeaning. You can pause, make a factual private note and consider an appropriate source of support. Better wording cannot guarantee a constructive response.

You've said it. What happens next?

You might leave the conversation feeling lighter, then wonder what was actually agreed. A short message can help you check that you both understood the same thing.

A FOLLOW-UP MESSAGE

"Thanks for discussing priorities today. My understanding is that we agreed to use one shared priority list. Alex will draft it by Thursday, and we'll review it on Monday. Please correct anything I've misunderstood."

Four things to make clear

Decision: What is agreed, declined or still being considered?

Responsibility: Who owns the next step?

Timing: When will there be an update or review?

Communication: How will the relevant people hear what happened?

If the date passes

"We agreed an update for Monday. Could you let me know the current position and a realistic next date?" One clear follow-up may help. You should not have to become the permanent project manager for your own concern.

If no answer comes, write down what happened. You know the response was missed. You may still need to find out why.

What happened next?

Keep the record proportionate. Include only information appropriate to store here.

Concern or question:**Decision, including what remains undecided:****Person responsible and agreed next step:****Next update: date, channel and intended recipient:****What actually happened, and when:****Did it help? What remains unresolved?**

“Not yet known” is a valid answer. Record the employee’s own account of whether it helped. Save your copy privately; this form does not send information to Humync.

An update is not the same as an improvement

The promised change has happened. But is your working day any better? Take a little time to notice. You do not have to know straight away.

It helped

“Having one priority list has made it easier to plan. I’d like us to keep using it.” Name what helped so it can be maintained.

It partly helped

“The list helps, but urgent requests still arrive separately. Could we agree how those enter the list?” You can recognise progress and identify the remaining gap.

It did not help, or it is too soon to tell

“The same issue is still happening” and “I need more time to assess this” are different answers. Both are useful. You do not owe a positive answer because someone made an effort.

THREE SEPARATE QUESTIONS

Was a response provided?

Was the agreed action carried out?

Did it address the concern?

A “yes” to one does not automatically answer the others.

If nobody has checked the effect, the outcome is unknown. Silence should not be recorded as satisfaction.

You do not have to decide everything today

Perhaps something has improved. Perhaps you have heard an honest answer you did not want. Or you may still be waiting. Start from where things actually stand. You do not have to fix the whole organisation.

Continue with a clear agreement

If there is meaningful progress, agree how it will be maintained. Look for actions you can observe, not just reassuring language.

Seek a different source of support

If the issue remains unresolved, you may want help understanding the routes available within or outside your workplace. Consider what information you need before choosing one.

Consider whether the role still fits

It is possible to appreciate colleagues and still decide that a role is no longer right for you. Give practical matters such as finances, commitments and alternatives proper thought. This guide cannot make that decision for you.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

“What would need to change for this situation to work for me, and what evidence would show that change is happening?”

If workplace difficulties are affecting your health or safety, seek appropriate professional support. A feedback workflow is not a substitute for that support.

The response is your responsibility

Someone may have thought about this conversation for days before coming to you. They might sound hesitant or frustrated. Give them time to explain before you explain your side.

Acknowledge and clarify

“Thank you for raising this. Have I understood the main issue correctly?” Ask what they want you to understand. Avoid turning their openness into a debate about loyalty.

Be honest about your authority

Explain what you can decide and what needs another person. Be clear about what information may need to be shared.

Own the next step

Agree responsibility and a realistic update date. If nothing has moved, provide that update anyway. If the answer is no, explain the reason and any available alternatives.

Return to the employee’s experience

Ask whether the response helped. Do not mark it resolved on their behalf. Some problems need resources or management changes that software cannot deliver.

A USEFUL RESPONSE

“I can’t promise that outcome today. I can explain the decision process, take responsibility for the next step and update you by Friday.”

Review one recent concern.

Use a real example privately. An unknown answer is a gap to investigate, not a reason to guess.

What was raised, and what did the employee need?

What was decided, and who owned the next step?

What update did the employee actually receive, and when?

What evidence shows whether the response helped?

What follow-up will you take responsibility for now?

If you cannot identify an update, arrange one through the appropriate channel. If you have not asked whether it helped, keep the outcome as unknown. Do not turn this exercise into a score for the employee.

Share progress without exposing the person

Some concerns affect one person. Others reveal an issue across a team. The audience for the update should fit the concern; a private conversation does not automatically belong in a public action board.

A team update can explain the change

“People told us that shifting priorities were causing duplicated work. We will trial one priority list for two weeks. Alex will maintain it, and we will ask the team whether it helps.”

Keep private details private

Share only what is appropriate for that audience. Avoid names, identifying anecdotes or sensitive personal details. Even without a name, a small team may recognise who a story concerns.

Make the route clear

Tell people where updates will appear and how to raise a remaining concern. Consider colleagues who do not routinely use the same digital channel.

EMPLOYEE CHOICE MATTERS

Before turning a personal concern into a wider update, discuss what can be shared and explain any limits. Employees should understand what will happen to the information they provide.

The purpose of visibility is to make decisions and progress understandable. It is not to make every employee's experience public.

One issue. One useful next step.

This is a flexible sequence, not a deadline you have to meet.

1 / Notice

Write down one recent situation. Separate what happened from what you think it means.

2 / Name

Describe its effect and what you would like to understand or change.

3 / Choose

Decide whether, how and with whom you want to discuss it. Seek support first if needed.

4 / Prepare

Use a script from pages 12-14. Keep the request specific and realistic.

5 / Agree

If a conversation happens, clarify the decision, responsibility and next update.

6 / Keep perspective

Review what was actually agreed. An intention is not yet a completed action.

7 / Revisit

At an appropriate point, ask whether the response helped and choose your next step.

Make the follow-through visible

Humync is an early-stage prototype exploring how organisations follow through on employee feedback. It is being developed by Jaydee Darbyshire, the author of this guide.

The current prototype demonstrates recorded decisions, named responsibility, action progress and published employee responses using fictional data. It does not send updates to real employees.

What a closed loop means in the demo

The prototype counts a loop as closed when feedback has a recorded decision and a published employee response. It tracks action progress separately. That label does not establish that the employee's concern has been resolved.

What we are still learning

We are testing whether the approach fits how teams work and provides enough value to adopt. Asking whether a response helped is a proposed area for testing, not a feature claimed to exist in the current prototype.

THE AMBITION

Help people understand what happened after they spoke up. Humync has not established that it prevents resignations or improves retention.

Explore the fictional demonstration:

humync.com/prototype

Please do not enter real employee concerns into the demo.

What stayed with you?

I want this to be something you can turn to when you cannot quite find the words. If you read it and thought “that’s me”, or “you’ve missed the point”, I’d like to know.

FOR EMPLOYEES

Which part felt familiar? Was there a sentence you could actually use? What situation or response did the guide leave you unprepared for?

FOR HR TEAMS AND MANAGERS

Think of one recent concern. How did the employee hear what happened afterwards? What made that easy or difficult to do?

Share a short response

On LinkedIn, message Jaydee Darbyshire, founder of Humync. If I shared this guide with you directly, you can reply in that conversation. One useful observation is enough.

Please leave out company names, employee names and identifying details. You do not need to send a completed worksheet or explain anything you would rather keep private.

Reading or responding to this guide is not a commitment to use Humync. The worksheets are useful on their own. The prototype is there if you want to explore the idea further.

What this guide is based on

This is a practical guide by Jaydee Darbyshire, adapted from his original SynergyCloud edition. The scripts, worksheets and the fictional stories are illustrative tools, not findings from customer research or validated assessments.

Employee voice

CIPD describes employee voice in terms of expressing views and influencing matters at work. Its factsheet and practical guide provide background on voice and participation. They do not validate Humync or the phrase “silent resignation”.

[CIPD: Employee voice factsheet](#)

[CIPD: Employee voice channels guide](#)

Use this guide with care

This is not medical, legal or personalised employment advice. It cannot guarantee a safe response, confidentiality or a particular outcome. Use appropriate support and established reporting routes when the situation calls for them.

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Website: humync.com

You do not need the perfect words to begin.

Start with one thing you want to understand.

Choose what you want to share.

Ask what happens next.

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Turn employee feedback into visible follow-through.

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