

The Urinal

A public restroom becomes a mirror for physical decline - mobility, stability, and confidence going quietly.

There are moments in life you never forget-not because they are dramatic, but because they are undeniable. They do not ask for permission, wait until you are ready, or soften themselves for your comfort; they simply arrive, blunt, unfiltered, and honest.

For me, one of those moments happened in a public restroom.

It was late, and I was tired-not the kind of tiredness that comes from a long day, but the kind that comes from a long life lived in the wrong direction. I had been carrying a heaviness that wasn't only physical; it was emotional, metabolic, and existential, the kind of heaviness that makes ordinary things feel harder than they should.

I stepped up to the urinal like I had thousands of times before, with the same motion, the same routine, and the same expectation.

But this time, my body didn't cooperate.

My stomach pressed forward, rounding out in front of me like a barrier, while my arms strained for the angle they needed, my stance felt wrong, my balance felt uncertain, and the geometry of the moment changed.

I leaned back, shifted, adjusted, and tried to pretend nothing was wrong.

But the truth was simple: my body no longer fit the basic mechanics of the world.

It is a strange thing to realize you can no longer perform a task so ordinary, automatic, and basic-a task you have done since childhood and never imagined could become complicated.

But there I was-struggling with geometry.

I remember the panic-quiet, internal, and suffocating-the kind you don't talk about, don't admit, and bury beneath jokes, excuses, and denial.

I remember thinking, How did I get here? But I already knew the answer.

Not suddenly, dramatically, or through one big mistake.

It happened through drift, avoidance, and years of small decisions that had quietly added up to a life I no longer recognized.

I tried again, shifting my weight and adjusting my stance, searching for an angle that worked, but nothing felt natural, nothing felt right, and nothing felt like me.

I felt heat rising in my face-the same heat I had felt in the booth, the same heat that comes when your body tells the truth before your mind is willing to hear it.

I finished awkwardly, clumsily, and ashamed.

I washed my hands without looking up, avoided the mirror completely, and walked out pretending everything was fine.

But something inside me knew this wasn't merely an inconvenience, a bad moment, or a tight space.

This was collapse becoming visible in a new way.

And even then, I still wasn't ready to face it.

Microlesson: Systems Fail Quietly Before They Fail Catastrophically

Most people expect collapse to announce itself dramatically-with a heart attack, a diagnosis, or a crisis-but systems usually fail more quietly than that, weakening gradually, predictably, and often in plain sight.

Before catastrophe, there is inconvenience; before danger, there is discomfort; and before collapse becomes undeniable, there is usually some small mechanical truth

your body has been trying to show you.

Your body tells the truth long before your mind is ready to hear it. The work begins when you stop treating those signals as embarrassment and start treating them as information.

Reader Reflection

What basic movement, function, or daily task has become harder than it should be? Where has your body quietly told you the truth-and what would change if you listened without shame?

System Principle: Loss of Operational Control Is a Diagnostic Event

When your body can no longer perform simple tasks without strain, that is not something to hide from; it is data.

Operational failure is not a moral issue, a source of shame, or proof of weakness; it is a signal that the system needs attention.

It is a diagnostic event-a clear moment when the body reveals what denial has been trying to cover.

And diagnostics are not the end of the story; they are the beginning of engineering.

ACTION STEP

Count the accommodations you make in a single ordinary day. Do not fix them yet. Just count them.

PREVIEW ENDS HERE

This is a free preview from the book. The complete chapter, and the rest of the volume, is in print. To order Volume I - Choose Life, email metabojoe@gmail.com.

metabojoe.com - The Metabolic Engineer by J.F. Kilty