



Have a good cry!

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Did you know that human beings are the only living organisms that cry tears of emotion? Crying is our body's way of getting rid of toxins and our tears act as a release valve for stress, tension, depression and grief.

Our body produces 3 types of tears, each having a unique, healing role.

- **Reflex tears ...** Which clear out particles that irritate our eyes like fumes, smoke, dust
- **Continuous tears ...** These are produced all the time to lubricate our eyes and keep them free from infection
- **Emotional tears ...** These are the ones produced when we are sad, or when we cry for joy or relief.

Emotional tears have healing powers for our body. They de-stress us. They calm us. They relax us. Emotional tears shed chemicals and toxins that accumulate when we're stressed. Additionally, they produce endorphins, our body's natural feel good hormones. And that's why we say, "I had a good cry" - because it is actually good for us!

Interestingly, emotional tears are the ones we have a problem with - often we feel weak when we cry, we apologise for 'breaking down' in front of others or we are embarrassed that we 'lost it' in public.

In relation to grief and crying, there is still some education to be done. We can be held back by outmoded ways of thinking about crying that encourage us to suppress our feelings like:

- ❖ **Big boys don't cry.**
- ❖ **Pull yourself together.**
- ❖ **There's no use crying over spilt milk.**
- ❖ **Be brave, don't cry.**
- ❖ **You must be strong.**

Instead, when someone is grieving, we need to send encouraging, helpful messages that say:

- ❖ **Crying is coping.**
- ❖ **Men are allowed to cry too.**
- ❖ **Crying is not weak, it shows you have the courage to be open about your feelings.**
- ❖ **Have a good cry, it's good for you.**



Doris Zagdanski is a leading figure in modern day grief and loss education. Her seminars are included in vocational qualifications in Allied Health, Counselling and Funeral Directing. Her books and free factsheets are available at www.allaboutgrief.com