



## Why Are You Crying?

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Some people think that crying is a sign of weakness and should never be done. Even when they tear-up because of an emotional situation, they hold back and do everything possible to prevent others from seeing that they have been moved. Unfortunately, the long-term consequence of this can be that they pile up their emotions and become more vulnerable for a break down in the future.

Other individuals cry freely about most things that happen during the week, even when others might not find the events to be deserving of such a reaction. It seems that they walk around with tears being just below the surface and the slightest little circumstance can cause an overflow. This situation can be embarrassing, not only to the person who is crying, but also to friends, family or co-workers who really don't know what to say.

Some people actually use their tears to get their needs met as a form of manipulation. They cry as a ploy for sympathy and, although it is an unhealthy method, frequently break down the other people who will give them what they want just to stop the tears.

Have you ever heard anyone state that they cannot cry? They often blame the drugs that they have been prescribed to combat their depression. They may feel like crying but the tears do not come, and this is can be rather upsetting for them.

Most of us cry at times that we and others think are "appropriate" - like when there has been a significant loss or death, during times of physical pain or when we have had a truly beautiful experience. The tears can lead to our own healing and, at the same time, open up an environment where others feel safe to allow their own feelings to surface. Crying together with someone else can form a unique and intimate bond because the thing that initiated them was shared.

It is interesting to think about how parents learn to recognize the different types of crying that a baby uses to get needs met. Sometimes the tears are associated with hunger, or pain or fear. Other times, however, the tears are used in a manipulative manner to get attention and are quickly replaced by a huge smile when the child is picked up.

Think about how often you cry and the reasons for doing so. Do you cry more or less often than others? Are the tears coming more or less often than in the past? Do you have a good reason to cry or is the situation puzzling?

What are the messages that you give to yourself and others about expressing your emotions? "Big boys don't cry" is a saying that denies a balanced and healthy approach to life. Instead, think of tears as a very human behaviour that honours your feelings and provides others with a very real picture of who you are.

Tears should not be feared or avoided or hidden. They are actually an outside reflection of what is going on in the inside of a person and should be valued.