

HOW TO CRY

I always thought that crying and laughing were opposites. They are not. They are siblings. Both are involuntary emotional releases. Since I started to become real, rather than an act, my laughter comes from a different place, deeper in my spirit. My tears come from that same place. It was necessary for me to learn to feel my feelings for me to be able to touch that place. It is a gentle place of feeling.

Crying and laughing are also similar physically. When I laugh my stomach muscles flex and relax, my face flushes red and my breathing takes on an irregular pattern. When I cry all of these occur, too.

I learned as a child to stop the flow of tears by hearing my father scream, "**If you don't stop that crying, I'll give you something to cry about!**" I learned to stop the tears by flexing the muscles that surround my tear ducts. I did it so often that I forgot how to relax them. I didn't really need to learn to cry. I needed to remember how to cry.

I had also learned not to focus my mind on anything that would evoke my emotions to a point that I might begin to cry. I needed to re-learn/remember how to stay in a mental place of feeling.

Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly as I learn to do it. One of the most important things I learned was not to expect instant success. I learned not to beat myself up for being unable to cry. I believe that chastising myself for my inability to let the tears flow would have made me less able to feel. It would have strengthened my need not to feel and slowed the process considerably.

This process takes time. It took me over a year before I was able to cry the first tear. It was worth the time and effort and wait. You have probably been blocked for a number of years, decades in many cases. It will take time to change. Please commit the time and be patient with yourself.

I would suggest that you begin each session with a prayer. Just tell God what you are trying to do and ask for His help. Then sit quietly for a few minutes in His Presence.

There are several tools that gave me considerable assistance in my quest for tears. The Reader's Digest and Chicken Soup for the Soul contain lots of heart-warming stories in every copy. I suggest that you get a copy and select a quiet spot, maybe under a tree in your back yard or by a gently flowing river or in a room in your home where you won't be interrupted. Begin to read.

When you feel the emotions starting to flow and the need to cry emerges, stop reading and focus on whatever you just read. Do not focus on trying to cry, as this will stop the emotional feelings. Think of the beautiful passage you just read and try to relax the muscles in your face and begin to flex and relax your stomach muscles. Think of the passage as long as you can and continue to try to slacken your facial muscles and flex and relax your stomach muscles. Do this until you feel the emotional peak has passed or until your tears begin to flow.

Once the emotional peak has passed, whether you cried or not, reread the passage and if you are able to touch the feelings again, repeat the process. If your urge to cry does not reappear, continue reading until you are touched again.

I suggest you plan about three sessions per week of about 30 minutes each.

Another good tool is movies. Go to "chick flicks". There are some really touching ones. Use the same physical exercises mentioned above as you feel the need to cry in the theater.

Certain books are also great tear starters. One of my favorite novels is The Education of Little Tree. Use the same technique we discussed above.

Audio-tapes and CD's are another good source of emotional food. The Education of Little Tree is available on tape and CD as are a number of other books and seminars. I also suggest anything by Leo Buscalia.

My own first break through was via audio-tape. I was traveling a lot during the time I was trying to learn to cry. I would listen to tapes and when something would touch me I would try to cry.

For months I couldn't even get close. Eventually I would feel like I was about to start to cry so I would pull over to the side of the road. As soon as I put on my blinker and started to slow down the feeling would pass. This happened many times before I was able one afternoon to get the car stopped and sit still and cry. What an exhilarating experience!

It was wonderful to be able to finally get a few tears out but it was not like the dam had burst. I still had to continue to make effort and do the things we've talked about for many months to improve on my ability to let the tears flow.

Today I can cry whenever I need to but my learning is incomplete. I am now in the process of learning to talk while I cry. I have some success to report but this part of process is not finished.

My ability to stop tears did not go away. I can stop them anytime. If I'm in an inappropriate place for crying, I delay the tears until a better time.

Once your ability to cry is relearned you may find yourself crying at times and not knowing why. Don't worry about it. Your mind doesn't have to know why you are feeling. Besides, you are probably a few decades behind on your crying. You are just catching up!

When I've had a good cry I feel like my soul has had a warm shower and dried off in the sunlight of the spirit. I hope this process blesses you as it has me!

SUGGESTIONS ON MAKING AMENDS TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT ALIVE NOW

If you are not yet able to really, really, really cry I suggest you follow the instructions listed above until your tears can flow freely before you attempt this process. This is not about writing. It is about tears.

Carefully choose a partner who will sit with you while you write a letter. Your partner should be someone who is very spiritually grounded and who will not try to stop your tears. Your partner's job will be to hold the space prayerfully as you do your amends. You really need a partner for this work! Ask your partner to read this so he/she will fully understand the process.

Select a location for this process. I strongly suggest that it be outdoors and near the place where you will "send" the letter.

Begin with prayer! After your prayer, begin to write the letter just like you would any other amends letter. Dear... (If this is an unborn child you may have feelings that it was a son or a daughter. Write "Dear Son", or "Dear Daughter" if you think you know. Write "Dear Unborn Child", if you don't know or Dear Grandmother etc.) Discuss your wrongs; how sorry you are; how much you'd like to repair the damage; how much you miss this person; how you feel about what you did. Write as much as you can as long as you can.

Here is the KEY! Write only until your tears begin to flow. When you start to cry, LAY THE PEN DOWN AND CRY! Your partner will probably have to help you with this so be sure he/she understands this part thoroughly. Cry as long as you can. Hold the thought that generated the tears and cry. DO NOT WRITE AND CRY! You are going to want to write and cry at the same time. DON'T WRITE AND CRY AT THE SAME TIME! It is my experience that if you write and cry at the same time, you will compress the time involved and the process will not get completed in one letter.

When the tears stop on their own, write again. Write only until you can begin to cry again. As soon as the tears start, put the pen down and cry as long as you can. Do this as many times as possible.

Blow your nose frequently. Each time your tears cease, stop and clean out your head. Cough up any phlegm and spit it out. DO NOT SWALLOW! It is most important that you do not swallow any of this material. You need to get it out of your system physically as well as spiritually. If you do swallow any of this material you may get a stomach ache and/or diarrhea. Please ask your partner to watch for this, too.

Add some newsy stuff if this is a family member. Don't forget to ask for forgiveness. You may also want to ask for them to pray for you to be able to receive the forgiveness.

Sign, "Love, Mom" or "Love, Dad" if it is to an unborn child or sign, "Love, (your name)".

Take the letter to a pre-selected place with your partner and prayerfully "send" it in smoke by burning it. Crumple the ashes in your hands and put them in the special place. Some special places are on this person's grave or another's grave, on some flowers, in a clear creek or at the base of a special tree. These are just ideas. You will know where the ashes go.

After you've "sent" your letter, wait a few weeks and then take a meditation time to think of this person for 15 minutes or so. You'll know if your amends is complete. If not, do another letter the same way.

May this bless you as it has me and so many others!

Please contact me at Tennmeadow@aol.com with any questions or comments.