

‘Mom, I Just Can’t Take the Crying’

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Abstract

When my nephew was about four or five, his best friend was a little girl of the same age. My sister and the girl’s mother were friends, so the two kids grew up together. My nephew was and is a sensitive child in many ways. He has always shared his toys, stopped to help other [...]

Article



When my nephew was about four or five, his best friend was a little girl of the same age. My sister and the girl’s mother were friends, so the two kids grew up together.

My nephew was and is a sensitive child in many ways. He has always shared his toys, stopped to help other kids on the playground who were in trouble, and worried about people around him who seemed upset.

But one day, when his friend was in tears about something while the moms and kids were on an outing, he just walked away.

My sister went over to him and said, “What’s wrong?”

He said, “Mom, I just can’t take the crying.”

You can call it socialization, and I believe that has something to do with it, but I think it’s more than that. I’ve written about crying and testosterone before, but the subject continues to come up. Just a couple of weeks ago, a newly minted trans man who had a passel of hassles going on said to me, “I’d cry if I could. Maybe I should just stop T for a while so I can.”

I’ve heard this same lament at least a dozen times from trans guys, and I’ve said the same myself. I have never heard a non-trans guy say, “I’d cry if I could, but this dang testosterone is preventing

it.”

Of course, there are a couple of reasons for that - non-trans guys don't have the reference that trans guys do. They've never been “off” testosterone, so they have nothing to compare it to. And they also haven't had the social permission to just sit down and have a “good cry,” which is probably the best form of emotional renewal in existence. They are simply not aware of the benefits that they're missing out on.

Obviously, women don't cry with abandon, and some women rarely cry at all, while some guys are real geysers. But I still think that testosterone plays a major role in preventing what can sometimes be a real pleasure.

What got me emoting on emotion was this heartwarming video (I'd cry if I could) of a little girl's surprise when her soldier father comes home from overseas. But it's not the dad and daughter that got me thinking - it's what the other kids are saying in the background.

One, in surprise, says, “She's crying?” Then another, as if by way of explanation, says, “She's happy!” And a third says what sounds like, “Those are happy tears.”

Now, I'm not going to put money on this, but I have an idea that the child who expressed surprise at the tears is a boy, and the two who explained are girls.

Just a guess from someone whose been there.

Readers, what do you think?

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