



How to Cry in Public

by
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Acknowledgements

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Forward

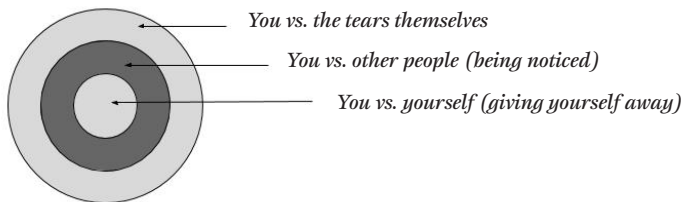
Although these techniques were originally designed to help one cry without being noticed, you should ever be ashamed or feel bad about public emotion. To be honest, the most pure form of dealing with tears is to not care at all; let them flow freely and if anyone asks what's going on, just tell them. But there are some times when it's useful to just not have to deal with it in that moment.

It goes without saying that no one has to be told how to cry. After all, it is one of the very first thing that we do as infants. Therefore, think of this zine as a guide to crying more gracefully; the practical details for handling the appearance of tears in your eyeballs. Knowing what's going on and what you can do has always helped me feel more at peace; I hope it does the same for you.

The Basics

First order of business: Remember to keep your wits about you. Avoid making hasty decisions in the heat of battle; this is exactly what the tears want. Just like in a real fight you have all the power until you show the other person that you're afraid.

You can think of the struggle against tears on three levels:



Most people only think of the outermost one or two rings, but if you're able to win the battle in the middle, you don't need to worry about anything else.

You usually have a little bit of time between when your eyes start to well up and when the tears will actually escape. Use this time to figure out what to do; or even if you need to do anything at all.

If you happen to be outside on a warm day, you can simply turn towards the street for 30 seconds and let them evaporate up into the sky where they came from in the first place. This is a great example of a technique that hits the center of the bullseye. If done correctly it can win you all three battles at once.

As your eyes start to well up, try ignoring the urge to reach for a tissue for a while. It will feel a little sketchy at first- like a mexican standoff between you and this sketchy mass of tear water lurking there in the corner of your eye. But sometimes the best place to hide is right in plain sight. (More on that later)

There are a number of techniques that can help keep those pesky tears safely in your eyes. For instance, tilting your head back and forth a little will even out the moisture and make it harder for the tears to form the critical mass needed to escape your eye.

If you're wearing sunglasses you can relax a little more. As long as the tears stay in your eyes nobody will see anything. All you have to do is avoid relaxing so much that you let a big fat teardrop roll down your face- unless you're literally trying to become a meme.

If it does get to the point where there's more tears involved than what your eyes can hold, what you want to avoid at all costs is drying your eyes with an object with inferior absorbency, like the back of your hand or the outside of a windbreaker. It will get the water out of your eye, sure, but if it's not being sucked up by something else, all you'll do is basically break the dam of tear water and send it streaming all over your face.

Proper eye wiping technique

Ironically, we wipe our eyes so that no one will see that we are crying, but most often it is the act of wiping itself that gives us away. There's no quicker way to call attention to yourself than with a series of frantic eye dabs.

The key to incognito wiping is to get it all in one go. No wasted motion. With your eye open, press the tissue up to the



corner of your eye near your nose, aligning the end of your thumb with your bottom row of eyelashes. Leave it there for a count of 5. It will feel like too much time, but remember the golden rule: no wasted motion. Calm and in control.

Fig 1. Proper thumb position

If you are using an object that doesn't fit in your hand all at once, like a scarf or a hood, a good technique is to hold the soft part against your eye with the fingernail side of your thumb. Creating a more concave surface will deliver more absorbent material to the corner of your eyeball where it is needed the most.



Fig 2. Hold thumb like so

Fig 3. Thumb + Scarf together



Crying at work

This can be a particular problem for those of us living with a large gap between what your day job is about and what's really important to you, deep inside.

The human soul isn't good with boundaries. No matter how good you are at creating a perfect, non-sentimental bubble around yourself during working hours you can never predict when some random powerful feeling will come shooting into your little atmosphere like a cosmic ray.

The good news is that no one is ever paying as much attention to you as you think they are. Usually people are so wrapped up in their day to day that the last thing they are going to do is decide to look at your face. Unless you give them a reason to, such as raising your hand to your face in an emotional, tear-drying manner.

That said, the best thing to do is imagine that every little hand gesture, exhale, or any other tiny movement you make telegraphs your exact emotional state to the outside world, because it kind of does. If you do need to wipe your eyes, before you make any kind of motion think of an made-up, non-emotional reason for touching your eye. Perhaps a speck of dust blew in through the window. Or maybe it was one of those cases of out-of-nowhere eyeball-itchiness - don't you just hate when that happens?

Another great way to avoid suspicion: Leave plenty of time between dabbing each eye. 7-10 seconds should be plenty. It will feel weird the first few times, but that's what makes it perfect. Normal crying procedure is to dry both eyes at the same time, so if you can do it differently people are much less likely to suspect that something's up.

If you're dealing with some kind of sustained emotional state involving multiple teardrops, the best thing is to think about the next 60 seconds or so, and identify which space-time paths involve the least head-on contact between your eyes and other people's' fields of vision.

If you have a box of tissues at your desk, and you have a job that doesn't involve a lot of random human contact, you can probably just stay right where you are and discretely dab until things calm down. But if that's not an option, sometimes the best thing might be to simply point your face towards the exit and walk out.

