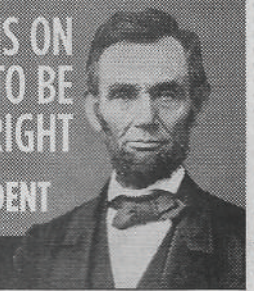


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“MY CONCERN IS NOT WHETHER GOD IS ON OUR SIDE; MY GREATEST CONCERN IS TO BE ON GOD’S SIDE, FOR GOD IS ALWAYS RIGHT

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, USA PRESIDENT



Are you strong enough?

MALLIKA BHATIA

The writer is a counselling psychologist and a holistic healer. Her work revolves around helping people

Soul search



You are a man, how can you cry?” “Tears are a sign of weakness.” Haven’t we all come across these statements at some point in our lives? Ever wondered what people are trying to tell us? Are they trying to say that we should not show our tears and emotions like fear and pain in front of others? Is it almost as if hiding these feelings makes us strong and helps us get over whatever we are going through, unscathed?

The answer is *no*. Hiding our feelings does not make us stronger. In fact, by not expressing and sharing our pain, the pain only increases. If we don’t accept our emotions or if we ignore them, then we are just suppressing them. We are pushing them deep into our subconscious mind, hence, making them permanent unwelcome residents in our minds and lives. The more we suppress, the more they impact us. Our reactions change, our behaviour changes and so do our interactions with others. The pain also overshadows our decisions. Yet we continue to

HUMANS NEED TO HAVE THE STRENGTH TO FACE THEIR WEAKER EMOTIONS LIKE FEAR, PAIN AND VULNERABILITY

ignore these feelings. It is similar to knowing that we have a burglar in our house who can harm us, yet we continue to live in the same house completely ignoring him, presuming that he will exit the house on his own without taking anything away. Is that being strong? Wouldn’t it be better if we confronted the burglar, made him aware that we knew of his existence?

Being strong is like confronting the burglar. It is to have the strength to admit that we feel weak and vulnerable. As humans, we all feel weak at some points in our lives. By ignoring these feelings we provide more strength to them. By not admitting to our vulnerability we lose the chance to grow out of it. One of the major reasons we don’t admit to our weaknesses is fear. The fear of not being able to fulfil a role or image that we have defined for ourselves. Like any other fear, here too the more we avoid the stimuli, the more fear we feel. The more we don’t admit, the deeper pain we go through.

Crying is another way in which a lot of us express certain emotions. Some of us cry when we are happy or excited. Crying is a great tool to let go

of heavy painful emotions. In many situations crying instantly makes us feel lighter. It also takes away the pressure from most of the over-whelming feelings making them easier to deal with. The so-called “clearly defined gender roles”, especially in India makes it almost impossible for men to cry. Men are not supposed to talk about their emotions or display them. Ironically, it is men who have a higher risk of heart diseases. Is the man not a human? Does the man not have a soul? Or do men and women have different souls?

Since the soul is free of gender bias and defined gender

roles, both men and women have a right to feel and express their emotions the way they want. Men who cry are not weak. They are more attuned to their emotions and have no shame in expressing them. That makes them emotionally stronger than women. Emotions too are not gender specific. Pain, fear, happiness, love etc. are common to both men and women. All we need is the strength to face the so called weaker emotions like fear, pain and vulnerability.

We need to realise that we take birth as humans to feel and experience emotions. This is the main purpose of living. Finally, doesn’t everything in life boil down to how we feel about an incident? When we get a raise in our salaries, it makes us feel good. When we get a promotion, we feel proud. When we have a fight, we feel bad. When we wait for a result, we feel anxious. All the learning in our lives is also about facing our feelings. Can we learn to control anger? Can we learn to be positive? Can we love unconditionally and can we be strong enough?

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