



SHOULD WE GIVE FREE REIN TO OR REIN IN OUR EMOTIONS?

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David Borenstein once said that feelings are not supposed to be logical. This explains why a lot of people seem to lose their handle on their emotions: getting a grip on one's emotions is difficult. What becomes an ultimately better alternative is coping with whatever emotion we feel, be it fear, repulsion, happiness, pleasure or contempt. We may go through the whole gamut of emotions in our lifetime, but it is how we respond to them that will truly make a difference.

If you're one of those people who have to jump up and down or talk to anyone and everyone when something especially joyful comes to them, go ahead. Share whatever happiness you feel with others who best understand you. Just remember that there are people who get easily turned off by too much mirth in any one person; they become sarcastic and find some aspect to dampen your happiness. My advice is: just be happy with the people who know you best of all. Those who choose to subdue your joy with thoughtless sarcasm and remarks are probably just envious that you can still afford to laugh and smile despite life's many crises. Let them stew in their envy.

If you're one of those people who need to get others to understand their grief and their emotional turmoil, try not to be misconstrued as being too familiar with others. We do need a shoulder to cry on from time to time, but we have to make sure that the shoulder we get wet with our tears has been offered by someone who personally knows us. Best friends accept us in whatever form we may turn out to be, much like our very own parents who accept us unconditionally. Let us share our most painful moments with people we love; otherwise, we only end up sharing TMI (Too Much Information). And be sure that those we share our emotional concerns with are not burdened by those of their own. One can only take in too much garbage, you know.

If you're one of those people who need to break or hurl something when they're overly mad or angry, look around you first. Are you inside a closed space where any hurling and throwing around will not unduly hurt any other person but yourself? There's this restaurant in my province which has a wall towards which you can throw plates (yes, plates!) and hurl invectives at, as you choose. A novel concept, the wall has had many patrons, which shows just how angry some people can be. The plates can be had and hurled at cost to the customer, of course. So those of you out there who have too much angst ensconced inside, feel free to drop by the restaurant.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What advice can you give for channeling human emotions?
2. Have you been successful enough in harnessing your emotions? Why or why not?
3. How do you express your joy? Your sadness? Your anger?
4. Who do you trust to understand your emotions most of all? Why do you trust him/her?
5. Is there any particular person you admire for being able to rein in their emotions? What makes this person special?