Men don’t cry. I remember the first time I heard those words. I was about 12-years-old and my hand had just been accidentally caught in the car door. I was now experiencing excruciating pain! As the tears begin to form in my eyes, I heard my older brother say, “You better not cry; Men don’t cry!” I looked up to him because even at 15, he never cried about anything. In my mind, I wanted to be a man about this too, so I dried the tears from my eyes and repeated the words “Men don’t cry.” From that day forward I was a member of club “men” and I stopped crying about things, at least on the outside. Where did the concept that men don’t cry come from? Is it because millions of years ago men were the providers for their families by hunting and killing vicious animals for dinner? In this arena, crying would be an occupational hazard. How could a crying man aim his spear at a charging lion, repel an enemy’s attack, or take a life all in the protection of his family? Back then, men needed focus, vision and the appearance of invulnerability to do their work. As a result of evolution, have men increased their capacity to keep their feelings to themselves?

Beyond evolution, some may also attribute the causes to why men don’t cry to biology. It has been noted that little boys cry just as often as little girls. But as testosterone floods the male brain in early teenage, young men begin to conceal their feelings of fear, sadness and vulnerability with silence. Because testosterone has put their feelings on a break, they don’t know how they feel. These actions only serve to drive men’s feelings deeper into their unconscious and cause them to stockpile their emotional baggage.

Blame the male brain. “Men are hard-wired differently,” says David Powell, PhD, president of the International Center for Health Concerns. He explains that the connection between the left brain, home of logic, and the right, the seat of emotions, is much greater in women. “Women have the equivalent of an interstate highway, so they move readily between the right and left brains. For men the connection is like a meandering country lane, so we don’t have such ready access to feelings.” As a result, men are particularly uncomfortable during heated “relationship” conversations. Faced with a partner’s negative feelings, a man often becomes mute, fleeing into stormy silence, keeping his emotional hurt to himself.

Hurt knows no gender. Men that do not cry on the outside mask hidden hurt on the inside. I have had a firsthand look at the consequences of men who did not have healthy emotional outlets. I have personally watched my father, uncles, and male relatives keep their emotions so bottle up that high blood pressure and strokes were their only outlets. Although this was the mindset I inherited, it should not be allowed to continue another generation. Negative life

experiences have negative internal emotions attached to them. Because men are hurting on the inside, their families and communities are hurting on the outside. These emotions need to be released in a healthy way. Crying can be a healthy outlet. When men cry, their pains become known, friends and loves ones are able to help, and permanent healing can take place.

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