

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Arron Baptist: "Boys Don't Cry, Men Shed No Tears"

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Arron "Ray St. Valentine" Baptist is this week's feature on "Tomorrow's Voices Today", the new series curated by poet and educator Mike Sonksen.

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### Boys don't cry, Men shed no tears

As a man in society it isn't acceptable to cry because it makes a man seem weak. Men are supposed to be strong in the physical sense, and in the mental as well. He also has to be dominant over his peers; men and women alike. In society a man isn't a man unless he expresses these traits. This is shown through conscious and unconscious actions, thoughts, and speech. You see, it seems like men are always in constant competition with one another to see who can be the alpha-male. To see who is the best, and to see who has biggest car or the most money; even to see who can have the most women. It must be cool to be a womanizer, but whatever happened to "quality over quantity"? What does having multiple women really prove?

This makes me think about how we as men are included in this competition so to speak, whether or not we want to be. The involuntary form of competition seems to come from peer pressure. We get made fun of for not having many girlfriends and made fun of because of our outfits (or lack thereof). Laughed at for not having exceptional physical strength. We're called little girl's for verbalizing our physical pain or expressing how we feel.

Why does my manhood come into question if I choose to be in a respectful and monogamous relationship? Does my conscious decision not to compete with other males relegate me to a status of inferior?

Why is my manhood up for debate if I let it be known that I am hurt, or if I want to express my emotions verbally?

Am I not human, too?

Why is this?

Maybe, because boys don't cry and men shed no tears. Does this mean we are supposed to act tough at all times?. Are we supposed to be emotionless? Is that why many men don't show much affection whether it's with their children, family, or friends? Why some men don't do hugs and kisses? We do daps, hand shakes, and high fives. Sociocultural norms force us to maintain a facade that we are strong, that we don't have a weak bone in our bodies. But, deep down we hurt more than people may know. We are silently screaming for someone to tell us it's okay to cry, it's okay to need help. Someone to tell us our manliness will not be in question or revoked.

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