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Is Blubbering in Business Ever OK?



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Sept. 2, 2011

But what if, despite your best efforts to damn the well, the salt water starts to pour forth?

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Workplace experts advise faking a coughing fit or contact lens malfunction and promptly excusing yourself from the room to cry elsewhere. That's what [Desiree Bennett Forsyth](#), a self-professed "crier," does.

"In confrontational situations and meetings, when I hear my voice start to waiver I simply excuse myself, calmly saying I have something else to attend to but that we can continue this later in the day," explained the Los Angeles area marketing professional. "I don't care if people believe me, as long as they don't see tears of frustration streaming down my face."

If you don't make it out of the room before a colleague sees your tears of frustration, some damage control might be in order. Amy Zhang, managing member of [Affinity Fund Services LLC](#), a hedge fund administration firm in San Francisco, suggests saying something like, "Obviously I have strong feelings about this matter," and then quickly getting back to business.

"Do not fall into the 'I feel this and that' trap and get personal, which can lead to more emotional build-up," Zhang said. Instead, she advised, say something like, "We need to resolve this problem." Then propose your solution and, if you can, suggest some action items your colleagues can begin to take.

Exceptions to No-Tears Rule

There are of course some professional scenarios where most people wouldn't fault you for getting a little misty-eyed.

"If you're a nonprofit and you've just made a major impact that involves saving people's lives, or if you're a firefighter and you've just saved a child, it's perfectly OK for your eyes to get watery," said Manhattan-based workplace coach [Julie Melillo](#).



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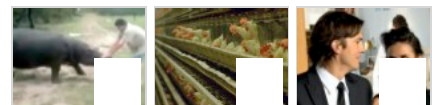
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After many years of checking her emotions at the door, long-time neonatal nurse Theresa Kledzik now permits herself to shed a few tears during "sad and tragic moments" at work.

"A subtle reveal of emotion is more appropriate than a stoic stance for the family and for me," Kledzik said in an e-mail.

Even so, she added, there are certain lines she refuses to cross.

"Even as I am emotional, I must remain the caregiver and attend to whatever needs to be done," Kledzik explained. "I don't feel it would be appropriate for my display of emotion to draw any attention, overwhelm the patient or family or to elicit their sympathy or comforting."

Melillo agrees.

"If you must cry," she said, "let the eyes water, not pour."

This work is the opinion of the columnist, and in no way reflects the opinion of ABC News.

Michelle Goodman is a freelance writer and former cubicle dweller. Her books include [My So-Called Freelance Life: How to Survive and Thrive as a Creative Professional for Hire](#) and [The Anti 9-to-5 Guide: Practical Career Advice for Women Who Think Outside the Cube](#). Follow her at [@anti9to5guide](#).

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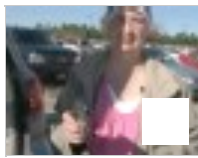
TellItLikeItIs2357 2:25 PM EDT Sep 04, 2011
deebastet: Is Boehner's wimpy weeping OK, because it was not the workplace but on National TV? _____ Well that depends. If Boehner was crying because someone called him a name, it would be considered wimpy. If he was crying because he was at a funeral to honor a soldier who died in battle, then it would not be.

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