

**A**s normal human beings, we experience different emotions, some of which are easy and a pleasure: joy, excitement; and some which are powerful and, in a way, feel good, such as anger.

However, there are lots of feelings which are not so welcome: hurt; sadness; grief; guilt. Usually, these are the ones we try to avoid or distract ourselves from.

We try to keep busy and 'power on', and brush ourselves off and keep going, but, soon enough, those suppressed emotions will catch up with us. We can be very good at keeping these feelings at bay, and we can sometimes do it for a very long time. But, no matter how long it takes, they will catch up with us. Not only that, allowing ourselves to feel our pain just as raw as it is, enables us to expand our capacity to feel joy and happiness.

It is not always easy to let the pain in. It can feel like standing on the edge of a huge precipice looking down into an abyss and thinking: 'If I go there, I won't be able to get back up again'. It's scary and the thought that we cannot recover sometimes prevents us welcoming some very natural, normal emotions.

When we suppress an emotion, we are storing away something that will hover around in the background like a small grey cloud hanging over us. It's always there, being managed yes, but festering and tainting any joy that we feel.

Knowing that we can recover is the key to being able to process all emotions. If you think back over your lifetime, there will be times that you have overcome and recovered from difficult emotions.

The process of therapy can help to unlock any unprocessed emotions and to be a calm companion along the way.

People also avoid talking and sharing their difficult feelings as they don't want to 'burden' or 'worry' the people they care about, or they don't want to 'be that person who is always moaning' or 'who is pathetic'.

A colleague of mine was describing how they dealt with



# Feel the pain: Be sad to be happy

Some emotions are welcome and others less so. Let's Talk columnist **Amanda Jayne**, the King's Lynn based psychotherapist and counsellor explains more.

their children leaving the nest.

'I left their bedroom door open; and each time I walked past and looked in, I was reminded that they were no longer there and it made me cry. I got used to that open door and empty room and it didn't feel so bad. I was able to really enjoy and look forward to their visits and enjoy their new life experiences as a normal and natural part of life.'

Compare that to someone who keeps the door shut; still changes their sheets and keeps their room exactly as it is; pretending that they are coming home for tea. That

person will take a much longer time to come to terms with it.

In the meantime, they will not be able to enjoy other aspects of their life as this will rumble away in the background, tainting any joy.

Therefore, it is wise to be brave and feel the pain, let it in and acknowledge it, in the knowledge that you will recover and feel better. It is normal for us to feel bad or sad sometimes. The sooner we can let that in and welcome it; the sooner the joy will be free and will increase.

Be sad to be happy. **LT**

## Ask Amanda Jayne

I would love to hear from you and will reply to letters which, if we print them, will remain anonymous. Your details will be treated confidentially. Write to Amanda Jayne MA MBACP at Harley St Psychotherapy, 11b St Ann's House, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1LT. email: [harleysttherapy@gmail.com](mailto:harleysttherapy@gmail.com), [www.harleystpsychotherapy.com](http://www.harleystpsychotherapy.com); phone 07760 669246.