

Big Girls Don't Cry, Or Do They?

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Trucking is a stressful job. Reefers go out under a produce load, tires blow out, trucks break down, ac units quit on the hottest days, heavy traffic and bad directions all contribute to the stress we all suffer on the road, add to that home/family stress and you have a volatile situation. Men often deal with stress by yelling, cussing and throwing things; some even pick fights on the radio or worse yet, face to face. Some women do those things also, but mostly we either go quiet or get emotional...we sometimes cry.

Recently I received an email from a rookie lady driver in one of the groups I belong to, she went to school to run with her husband. In the email, she related the run from hades. It started out with them having to wait for hours on the pick for a load of strawberries, when they finally got loaded, they got a ways down the road and the reefer went out, something to do with the electrical. Their company couldn't find a repair shop to get them into, so told them to stop when it shut off and jump it off the tractor batteries. "The derved thing seemed to stop every hour", she said. Her husband took care of the problem with the reefer, but with all the stopping and starting she couldn't get any rest, then it got worse...the ac unit in the tractor started acting up.

On one of the reefer jump stops, she got out to get something cold to drink and to walk their dogs. One of them jumped out of her arms while she was taking him out of the truck and injured himself, she wanted to find a vet for him, but they were under a strawberry load with a badly acting reefer and had to keep going. Hot, sweaty, tired, worried about the load; all the stress of the day got to her and she burst into tears right in the truck stop parking lot.

My mother cries if she is happy, glad, mad, sad...wish I would of gotten her good looks instead of her emotions in the dna mix. I don't often burst into tears, but once in awhile, if no one is looking, I will shed a few tears for stress relief if things are going terribly wrong. It doesn't make one a bad person by any means, or a sissy girl.

Stress can kill you or someone else out on the road. It can make you distracted enough that you do stupid things that result in everything from getting tickets, having an accident, getting lost, to actual sickness. Chronic illnesses like high blood pressure, depression and diabetes can be intensified by stress. Stroke and heart attacks too are directly related to stress.

When you become too stressed, you might not get enough sleep and become overly fatigued and your immune system can become compromised leading to more colds, flu and other infectious diseases.

Some things you can do to relieve stress are:

Take a break if possible.

Listen to soothing music or a book on tape.

Call a friend or family member that you can talk to...remember to stay hands free.

If you have time, take a long shower.

Stop at a shopping center and buy something for yourself.

Go to the back of the parking lot and throw rocks at trees. (only in daytime)

Learn to do relaxation meditation.

Take a vacation away from the truck, even if it is a night in the motel.

Find another lady driver to visit with, she will probably understand.

If stress is becoming a very real problem and you cannot deal with it yourself, then by all means consult a doctor or therapist. Talking to a professional or getting some sort of driver friendly medication, even for the short term, can often times help you find a way to deal with stress in a positive manner.

Not that crying isn't a positive way to deal with stress, it is how most of us women are built by nature. The only problem is that if one of our brother drivers or someone that doesn't drive see us crying, embarrassment can be added to the list of stressors we are dealing with and that isn't fun, but if it makes you feel better, then cry away. Big girls do cry sometimes when things get really tough, then we dry our eyes, blow our noses, and 'get 'er done'!