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Drew Barrymore Gets Emotional While Recounting Africa Activism in Charity Speech



Drew Barrymore, Courtesy of Flower Beauty

"Everything is needed — always be thinking of children's needs, whether you think it's too soon or too late," she said. "Life has shown me it is the way to think and live."

Drew Barrymore made one of her first public appearances since the announcement of her divorce in New York City on Tuesday. She gave an emotional, yet lighthearted, speech – and no, the two moods are not mutually exclusive.

"As you women know, laughter and crying are twins — and you men are still struggling with that," she said as the guest speaker of a Pierre Hotel luncheon benefiting the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the world's first child protective agency. "If I break down during this story, you will understand that I'll just turn it into laughter, and you men will think we're crazy."

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"We are, but it's that 'crazy' that actually evolves into compassion, and that's what is beautiful about women," she continued to the 250 guests. "There are gorgeous things about you men too, but I happen to understand women, being one myself, and we wear our hearts on our sleeves. So when we discuss issues of importance, it brings out our emotions."

Wearing her wedding ring after announcing her split from art consultant Will Kopelman earlier this month, the actress and entrepreneur opted in the speech not to reflect on her own childhood, but to read a chapter from [her autobiography *Wildflower*](#), with which each attendee was gifted. Entitled "Africa," the chapter recounts how a news article in 2004 moved her to travel to Kenya with the United Nations to help its youth population. Barrymore's voice occasionally quivered as she explained that what began as an assignment for *Marie Claire* became the beginning of her activism efforts, including the establishment of the Barrymore Learning Center.

"Everything is needed — always be thinking of children's needs, whether you think it's too soon or too late," she concluded. "Life has shown me it is the way to think and live."