



Enjoying Holidays!

Dealing with stress, fatigue and unrealistic expectations during any holiday season.

Many look to the holidays as magical, special times, recalling wonderful memories from childhood. For others, where disappointment, tragedy or conflicts occurred during past Thanksgiving, Christmas or other holidays, future expectations are affected.

Some, through death or divorce, will be alone for the first time on the holidays this year. They may experience depression or feelings of hopelessness; possibly envisioning a continued lifetime of similar holiday seasons to come. Others experience stress...increased time pressures, expectations, and financial pressures. This year may even be a time of transition: from child/young adult to parent when you wonder where the time, money & energy will come from to put on a dazzling show. A biological condition, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), is triggered by sunlight exposure and affects some individuals, causing them to 'have the blues'.

For those where biology is not a factor, beat the holiday blues by doing things a little differently:

1. **Admit there may be a problem.** If you have holiday blues, be honest with yourself!
2. **Set Realistic Expectations!** Do you really have time or energy to host a special dinner or weekend gathering? Do you need to attend all those parties or every church function? Do you really need to impress others to feel good about yourself?
3. **Get Rid Of Guilt!** Does everyone depend on you? Feel others will be upset if you don't do what is expected? Warn them now: things are going to be different this year. It's OK to cut back, ask for help, change 'traditions' & still have a great time!
4. **'De-Commercialize' the Holidays!** Money can't buy you love. End commercial madness, which Christmas has become for many. Let others know you may not participate in gift exchanges or events if this has been an area of past over-extension.
5. **Take Care of You!!** Moderate Exercise is the best weapon for the blues! MAKE yourself walk 30 minutes daily. Sleep, but don't oversleep, to feel rested, not groggy. Eat right. Avoid Christmas fats, sugars & that nervous system depressant, alcohol.
6. **Try something new!** Cut your own tree. Make wacky Christmas cards with the kids from items around home. Serve at a homeless shelter. Visit elderly friends. Take time to laugh with a neighbor in your yard! Capture the real spirit of Christmas!
7. **Be With Those Who Make You Happy.** Why travel to be with those who increase depression or feelings of inferiority? Go where family & friends enjoy your company & are a positive influence...or remain home and begin enjoyable traditions for yourself & your own family.
8. **Renew Your Inner Spirit!** We become so caught up in the pace of the season; we often forget the value of quiet times needed to renew our inner spirit. Focus on your faith at this special time of the year and attend inspirational services. Follow family traditions, which bring peace, sharing with others feelings of love and kindness shown during the year. Simply enjoy quiet moments alone meditating. These suggestions may be difficult to do; there is always a price to pay if disappointing others or changing routines. Instead of attempting to live an unrealistic movie-image of Christmas this year, experience the season as one of peace.

Kick back, relax and find time to renew your inner self. Take charge to build wonderful memories and relationships for years to come.

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