

## Cure Your Holiday Blues by Dr. Denise Wood

People often feel depressed over the holidays and may spend days doing nothing. This inactivity fans your depression and can lower your feelings of self-worth. Here's a quick checklist to take your holiday blues pulse:

- 1) If you avoid activities that you normally like to do; such as, working out.
- 2) If you're feeling hopeless and helpless.
- 3) If you stay in bed for long periods of time, while family & friends enjoy the festivities.
- 4) If you crave salty foods and carbohydrates.
- 5) If you are a social person, and find yourself socially withdraw by avoiding friends and family.
- 6) If you have a number of physical symptoms, such as stress, that evolve with the holiday hoopla.
- 7) If you are unable to control your emotions and cry easily over things you would not normally cause you to cry.
- 8) If you have low energy, such as, have trouble picking out an outfit, or simple decisions.
- 9) If you are not able to have pleasurable sensations.
- 10) If you have self-destructive and self-defeating thoughts.
- 11) If you feel the loss of a loved one, greater than normal.
- 12) If you are unable to address holiday gifts/cards.
- 13) If you have feelings of guilt, which you do not normally feel.
- 14) If you are unable to demonstrate affection or emotion to your loved ones.

If you are feeling depressed, here's a way to conquer your holiday blues:

- \*Make holiday plans and stick to them, even if you do not feel like going.
- \*Break holiday tasks into smaller components. For instance plan holiday shopping and holiday baking on two different days.
- \*Give yourself credit for every small holiday endeavor that you accomplish.
- \*Keep exercise as a holiday priority. You won't feel so bad for eating all those yummy holiday treats. How about ice skating?
- \*Watch a funny holiday movie, with or without people, laugh, laugh, laugh. Laughter is a healing medicine.
- \*Treat yourself to a holiday gift while shopping for others; you deserve it!
- \*Volunteer for hospitals, food banks, or find someone worthy and help a family or individual.

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