

DON'T LET THE HOLIDAY BLUES RUIN YOUR SPECIAL TIME

By Ellen Harris, LMHC, CEAP

Ever wonder why it's so easy to get depressed during the holidays? It's supposed to be a time of thanksgiving, sharing joy, and spending time with loved ones. Yet it's not uncommon to feel frustrated, overwhelmed, and alone.

The "Holiday Blues" are a reality. Perhaps our expectations are too high. We get down on ourselves for not having the "storybook life." We feel everything *should* be perfect – perfect decorations, perfect party, perfect gift, perfect relatives...

The truth is... NOBODY'S perfect! I've heard it said that we are all "perfect in our imperfection..." That's part of being human. It may sound a bit trite, but it's true. We are human beings with human frailties. We make mistakes. But, especially during the holidays and as another year ends, we tend to look back at our past and lament all the things we "coulda, woulda, shoulda" done.

Hind sight is helpful if we recognize our misdeeds and learn not to make the same mistakes again. Someone said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. How many times do we do just that? It may not be conscious, but we tend to find ourselves in situations that mysteriously resemble past miseries.

Why not try something different? Rather than attempting perfection, try practicing *MINDFULNESS*. Pay attention to your thoughts. Simplify your life. Focus on what you can do now to bring peace and joy into you life and into the lives of those around you. Keep a notebook by your bed and start and end your day by writing positive thoughts of appreciation. This can be a very powerful tool in developing new ways of thinking.

Celebrate these holidays with increased awareness. Steer away from negative people and situations. Develop an "attitude of gratitude." Speak kindly to others. Look for something positive in every situation and person. Explore opportunities to help others. End this year with a joyous holiday season.

For more information, call Ellen Harris, LMHC at 239-404-0862.

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