

# Conquering the Holiday Blues!

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*'Tis the season for the Holiday Blues. What is it about this traditionally joyful and restful time of year that somehow produces the perfect storm of stress, expectations, isolation, and over-extension that can leave us feeling sad, depleted, disconnected, and alone? This week, we'll take a close look at the many facets of the Holiday Blues, and share seven strategies to help banish the Holiday Blues once and for all.*

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Ah, the Holiday Blues. It's that time of year again, that finds some of us fully into the swing of the Holiday spirit, and many others feeling less than merry, happy, and engaged in the media-hyped joys of the season. What's more, all this merry-making and missing out is going on during the shortest days of the year, when most of us are affected — and some of us struggling with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)— by the lack of daylight. With so much going on all at once, let's take a look at how to manage our moods and make the Holiday season one that you can enjoy in your own fashion.

## ***In our multi-cultural society***

In our multi-cultural society, many people do not feel part of the traditions that are celebrated at this time of the year and may feel isolated and apart from their friends, co-workers, and neighbors. And even some people who do celebrate the Holidays struggle with feelings of isolation, disappointment, or a profound fear of missing out or do not feel good or look forward to the Holidays for myriad reasons.

## ***Seasonal stressors and expectations***

Many people, quite understandably, feel distressed and overburdened by expectations due to relentless media Holiday hype that begins months ahead of the Holiday season. The over-commercialization and consumerism of the holidays leave many people feeling dread of being unable to meet unrealistic expectations.

Those who struggle with alcohol and drug use can find social gatherings extremely stressful and challenging to navigate. Many people struggle with painful memories from their childhood. This is also a time of year when those grieving the loss of a loved one find their grief intensified. And it's all happening at a time when we're all feeling the loss of sunlight, during the shortest days of the year.

## ***No matter how***

No matter how you celebrate or otherwise spend your time over the upcoming Holiday season, it's important to remember that this is your time... and you can define and control how and where you spend it, with whom!

It is important to be kind, not only to others but to yourself as well. Set limits on spending, and manage your time and efforts wisely. If you're hosting a party or a Holiday meal, ask for help if you need it. If you've over-booked your time and you're feeling overwhelmed by social commitments, take control and politely decline an invitation or two. If you're feeling isolated and alone, make an effort to connect with people whose company you enjoy, doing things that you love.

## ***Creating positive change***

Author and motivational speaker Wayne Dyer once said: "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." If you are someone who struggles at this time of the year, maybe it's time to look at the Holiday season in a new way, and allow yourself to enjoy yourself and those you love in a way that suits who you are today.

However, you have spent this season in the past, it's important to remember that you are living your life, and you can set your own rules! If you find yourself struggling with how to enjoy the Holiday season, why not change the way you approach the season? Start a new tradition with people who share your perspectives, interests, and passions.

No matter what the Season brings, remember to maintain self-care routines, and stay connected to your feelings. Take care of yourself and focus on what brings you joy and happiness. This may be the Holiday Season, but it's your time to spend with whomever you choose, doing what you want!

### **Seven Strategies to Help Conquer the Holiday Blues**

*Here are seven strategies to help you reframe and transform The Holiday Blues into a time of connection, rest, and joy!*

**Stick to** healthy routines, including exercise, sleep, and other self-care strategies that support you in your daily life, and take care not to over-indulge in alcohol or drugs in social settings.

**Set boundaries** around your expectations for the season, and your expenditures.

Remember, it is the people in your life and the quality of your time together that matter most. Managing expectations and staying within your comfort zone will lower stress and worry.

**Make plans** to get out into nature and take in the mid-day sunlight. Remember, this is the time of year when daylight is at a premium, and many of us are adversely affected by a lack of exposure to sunlight.

**Know** your limits, and stick to them. If you're feeling overwhelmed by demands on your time, realize that it's alright to decline an invitation. Better to take time and rest, rather than show up exhausted and disengaged!

**Surround** yourself with positive people, and reach out and make a plan with someone you enjoy spending time with if you're feeling isolated or alone.

**Reach out** to a friend or family member who may be struggling, or spend a little time volunteering with an organization in your community that supports vulnerable and disenfranchised people.

**Create** a new tradition. If the Holiday traditions are not part of your culture, or if traditions no longer feel genuine for you, find a new way to enjoy this time of year, when everything has slowed down a little. Do something that makes this time special and enjoyable for you!



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and take control of your future.

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### **About the author**

*Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker, columnist and advocate in the field of mental health and wellness.*

*Her upcoming book, **A Deeper Wellness**, will be available for pre-sales in January 2022, and her in-depth online self-help program, **A Deeper Wellness**, offers powerful mental health guidance, life skills, knowledge and healing, anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/> <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>*

