

Tips to Help Beat the Blahs

Holiday expectations seldom match the picture-perfect get-togethers portrayed in make-believe relationships on television, in the movies or advertisements. That doesn't have to mean a thumbs-down holiday season.

Few families go through life without experiencing the death of a family member or friend, divorce or disappointment such as the loss of a job, onset of an illness or concern about a child's choices.

First, acknowledge the fact that you're not alone. Everyone has ups and downs and will face challenges in life. Think of a disappointment for what it is: the loss of a dream. As an example, when a company downsizes and a career ends, a dream of success can be lost.

The same is true when a marriage ends through death or divorce. The hope and dream of a life together ends when a spouse dies or fails to honor what his or her spouse had considered a lifetime commitment. Mourning such losses is the first step in moving toward acceptance and personal growth.

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To improve your outlook, think about your goals and values. Consider what you have accomplished and make time to be with persons who nurture and encourage you.

If you want to improve relationships with others, be respectful, thoughtful and intentional. In everyday life, a willingness to try something new, rather than repeat behaviors that continue to produce the same outcome may be more likely to lead to success.

Suppose, for example, a sizable, but unexpected bill arrives in the mail. The spouse who opens the mail is concerned about the bill, but rather than rush angrily toward his or her spouse who is busy organizing the family's meal, he or she waits until a time when daily stress eases and the couple will be able to talk calmly.

Reach out. Look for ways to take the focus off yourself and focus on others. Adding some humor to your life also can be beneficial. A good laugh can lighten the mood. Celebrate the positive and skip the pity party.

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