

## Ask Your Therapist

By Krishnabai, MSW, LICSW, the Ashby Center for Counseling

### **Your Question: How To Deal With the Holidays**

What is true about the holidays is this: we have bodies that run partially on solar energy and when the darkness is greater than the sunlight, many of us run down during the very time when we are expected to do the most! We have to work, take care of the kids and other family members, cook more (and more elaborate) food than usual, go shopping and be tempted to spend money we don't have, somehow fit in time for school events, parties and visits from people we may either love or dislike (or both) where the opportunities to overindulge in food and alcohol pressure us to do both, and survive all this with grace and good humor.

Another truism of the holidays is this - almost no one is as happy as the ad campaigns tell us we all should be. In the face of the amplified holiday emotions, we feel all our feelings, not just the happy ones. Whomever died, moved away, disappointed us, let us down or otherwise made a strong emotional impression on us during the year will be remembered with all the pain that accompanied that memory.

Here is a little formula to make the holidays easier: eliminate, delegate, and reserve.

Eliminate all activities you just do because you can't remember why. Why are you still making fruitcake when everyone you know is on a diet or should be? Why are you giving a holiday party long after all the people you really had it for have moved away or just quit coming? Why are you putting up the tree if you resent the work and no one really cares anyway? And either eliminate or reduce the amount of alcohol you have in the house this year. The less there is, the less people can drink. Remember - alcohol is a depressant so it will amplify the Holiday Blues and there is already enough depression in the air!

Delegate the work you have been doing. The kids are old enough to help with some things - use their help! If your family insists on sending out holiday cards, give the job to them! If they want friends over, show them where the vacuum is kept. Suggest rotating where the entire family will gather. It does not have to be at your house each year. Or at your creepy Uncle Igor's house...

Finally, reserve some alone time just for you. Block off time for a soak in the tub, sit by a pond in your vehicle for a few minutes and breathe, get a massage or a manicure and check in with yourself to see how you are doing.

**Next month: How do I get my husband to come to couples therapy with me?**

If you want to ask a question that may be answered in a generalized way in a future column, if you would like to read my old columns, or if you want to reach me via the Internet, go to my web site [www.Krishnabai.com](http://www.Krishnabai.com) or email me at [csaccfc@aol.com](mailto:csaccfc@aol.com).

Krishnabai, MSW is a therapist in Ashby and Wellesley Hills where she sees adults, older teens and couples. The core of her work is the discovery and expression of the Authentic Self. She focuses on the identification, expression, and resolution of emotions, commitment to honesty and the use of remedial education and information.

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