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After Christmas Letdown?

By Susan Dunn

After Christmas Letdown? by Susan Dunn, MA, certified Emotional Intelligence Coach

"You gotta pay the price," one of my clients is always telling me. She's referring to what is a law of physics, and also the way things work - what goes up must come down.

The higher your Christmas, the more exciting, chaotic and tumultuous, the more likely you'll be tumbling down just as far. Why? According to psychoneuroimmunologist (big word meaning the effect of brain and emotions on health, i.e., immunology), Paul Pearsall, Ph.D., our smart bodies want to establish equilibrium. Picture a graph on a midline. The midline is calm, routine. We can get very happy and go up; or very unhappy and go down. Therefore, if our emotions go way up, there will come a time when our inner wisdom brings us down low, so we settle back into that middle space.

Does this mean if you have a terrible grief or depression, you can expect to be that happy at some time in the future? I've seen it happen. It's a tenet of Emotional Intelligence that if you don't fully experience one emotion, you stuff down ALL emotions. In other words, if you face grief and go through it, not around it, you will carve out a space to be filled with happiness. If you don't, you shut down, and become numb, in which case you don't feel the bad, but you also don't feel the good, and greatly limit your experience of life.

So, if you're having a "down" period now what do you do? First of all, accept it. You can last it out. To speed it on its way:

1. Get active. Exercise an extra hour. It creates physical energy, it clears the mind, and flushes out toxic emotions. Do it especially if you don't feel like it.

2. If you're an introvert you may prefer something like yoga or Tai Chi.

3. Clean your house from top to bottom, doing the physical work yourself. Do it like a ritual, that is, with meaning. This is to get rid of the yuck, and make room for the sunshine. This is a tradition in many cultures at the New Year for a reason - because of what we're all going through right now! Throw stuff out, sweep toward the doors, vacuum then take the bag out and dump it in the garbage, wash the

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furniture with something like Murphy's soap.

4. Accept quiet times and go with the flow. Curl up by the fire and read good books. Coddle yourself with extra long baths with special lotions. Get your nails done. Get massages. Fix yourself a warm breakfast. It's kind of a hibernating time anyway.

5. Jumpstart your thinking brain. Start a new course. If you're an extravert, go to community ed classes. If you're an introvert, enjoy yourself on the internet with distance learning courses and take teleclasses.

6. Start a new intellectual project at work (if possible) and/or at home.

7. Start anything new - new health club, new piano lessons, coaching, fencing lessons, new hairstyle.

8. If you live in an area where this is high allergy-time (such as Texas), pay adjust your diet, because it's cumulative - pollen PLUS diet PLUS dust and mold inside your house. Clean out your air ducts.

9. Laugh. One simple exercise is to put a pencil in your teeth crosswise. This makes the muscles of your face into a smile, and this helps our bodies. It gives us the same great relief a good laugh does.

10. Don't fight it. There is no need to appear "Miss Congenialty" when you aren't feeling that way. It's okay to be in a quiet place.

Also, because this is the peak of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), get more sunshine. Exercise outside. Take a Caribbean cruise. When the sun crosses the bed in the spare bedroom, go lie down and soak up the rays.

Change is the only thing that stays constant, so know that your mood will eventually find its place. If you are seriously depressed, check with the many mental health professionals available to help you.

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What Do You Want This Year?

By Angie Dixon

Christmas is all around us, and many people are making up wish lists. Those who aren't doing that are busy setting down their New Year's Resolutions already. But this is a good time to sit down and do some serious introspection.

What do you want from the holidays this year? Do you want to rush around, spend a lot of money you

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don't have, and yell at the kids for not playing with all twenty of the toys they asked for—at the same time? Is that really how you want to spend Christmas?

We talk about "Christmas spirit," and mostly we mean giving. Giving of ourselves, giving to people who need it. That's great, that's Christmas spirit.

But I think there's another aspect to "Christmas spirit." I think it's spiritual. And don't close your screen on me because I said spiritual. I didn't say religious, because it's not. I think it comes from our souls.

I think deep down, each of us has a spirit that wants to be expressed. And I think at Christmas, when we're naturally thinking of others, that spirit is more easily expressed. I think if you want to, you can have a spiritual Christmas. You can feel loving, caring, generous. You can feel like a kid at Christmas, just by opening up to your spirit.

So what do you want this year?

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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What Do You Want This Year?

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Christmas Tree Ornament Tips

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120 Lip-Smacking Good Jam Recipes

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COCKTAILS - How to Make and Enjoy them

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