

## **Post - Holiday Let Downs - How to Survive and Thrive**

**By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.**

If the holidays have left you feeling a little let down and depressed, you can restore your sense of balance and contentment by shifting your focus to the new year ahead. The torn, ragged wrapping papers, bows, and empty boxes create a sense of emptiness. A desire to fill up this void with something can create a craving to spend money. Trying to recreate that spending euphoria experienced during the holiday shopping season by compulsive spending just leads to another let down. To get over the post-holiday blues, try making a list of the things that you accomplished this year. Or, better yet, make a list of the blessings you received this year. A little gratitude goes a long way in reducing depression and disappointment.

If you are kicking yourself over the goals of 2008 that you did not accomplish, then spend some time and energy figuring out what went wrong. Did you make progress toward those goals? Did you get completely sidetracked? Did unforeseen obstacles get in the way? Figure out what happened, but most of all, move from telling yourself that you are a failure, to using it as a problem solving exercise. Then decide what your goals for the New Year will be. Are your goals left overs from last year's goals? Are they completely different or something in between?

In setting goals for the New Year, identify what your values are. What are the most important things in your life? If you say, "my spouse", "my kids", "my community", etc" and your goals are focused on making money or business, then something is off. You must have business goals to stay in business, but if you don't also have goals that match your values, then you may continue to feel that disconnect between your efforts and your sense of accomplishment. Ask yourself, "how can I feel happier next year?" or "what will help improve my family's sense of happiness and well-being". Do you need to gain more control over your time, your finances and spending, your ability to communicate your care and concern for your family? Whatever it might be, identify what you consciously want to work on this next year. Expect that you can have a positive influence over the direction that your life will take and make a plan of action to accomplish it.

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