

Chasing Away the Winter Blues

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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“For some reason, every year after Christmas I tend to get kind of depressed,” my girlfriend confessed to me recently. She explained that Christmas is her favorite holiday and once it’s over she feels as though there is nothing to which to look forward. She’s not alone in feeling a mild case of winter blues. If you too can relate, consider the following strategies to help chase away those occasional blues.

Take a (Nearby) Vacation

While he may not readily admit it, I think my husband gets a little stir crazy during our long winter season. In November, he asked about the dates of the children’s spring break. “We have to take some kind of vacation to someplace warm,” he insisted. If heading south is out of the question at this time, consider doing what our cousins do; Go on an overnight or weekend vacation at a local hotel with nice amenities, like a swimming pool, whirlpool, sauna, fitness center, etc. Enjoy getting away from your normal routine and being refreshed in new surroundings. Whoever said you had to leave the city to be on vacation, anyway? Simply do a staycation.

Create a Non-winter Space at Home

Using cues from your favorite time of year or favorite getaway spot, decorate a room in your home with elements of that theme (no need to go overboard). Consider forcing daffodil or tulip bulbs to remind you of spring. Use floral throw pillows to liven up your living area. My crazy girlfriend Natalie shared with me how that as a young mom of two kids, she would decorate her bathroom with Hawaii in mind; pictures on the door, colorful floral shower curtain, towels, and accessories. She would then tell her boys that she was going on “vacation” and disappear into her bathroom for an hour at a time for a long, rejuvenating bath, which included candles and music. She even went as far as to hang a do not disturb sign on the door handle. The children were instructed to tell all callers that mommy was on vacation! (For a long time, her boys

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thought a vacation was something that only happened in the bathroom.)

Try Something New

Challenge yourself to pick up a new hobby or interest that you have been intending to explore. By starting right now, you'll have something to look forward to on a regular basis. A new couple we just met asked us about taking a ballroom dancing class with them. You could start a biweekly game night with friends, take a swimming class, pick up a winter sport, join a book club, or attend one of the many regular free seminars that are available at your local library. The possibilities are endless!

Remaining upbeat during our lengthy Minnesota winters definitely calls for a bit of creative thinking. It's an opportunity for us to practice what the bible encourages: "...I have learned, in whatever state I am in, to be content..." Phil 4:11 When you are particularly struggling, think of the benefits and blessings of living in lovely Minnesota. There are many-one of which is this: the extreme temperatures help keep the riff-raff away! Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.