## Lifting The Lows Of Holiday Season Depression

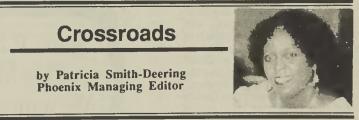
Nothing can be lonelier than this time of year. All around are people gathering with family and friends to enjoy festive dinners, gala parties, and other spirited or spiritual celebrations of the season. But, right in the midst of all this merriment are individuals who experience such a feeling of depression and melancholy that many end up among the holiday death statistics, victims of suicide.

Frequently, as we go about the business of leading our very rushed, complicated lives, we don't notice others who are in the process of slipping away from us and from life. Some have become dejected because life has thrown one of those curves it's apt to do, and they can't see any constructive way out of their situation. It may have been the loss of a loved one who used to share other holidays with them. Or perhaps, this year they can't provide their families with the kind of Christmas they would like because they've been out of work for so long that they simply can't afford one.

There are as many different reasons as there are individuals who suffer from the holiday blues. They feel like they're treading water with no hope of rescue. They've lost faith in themselves, the future, and their God. The season really gets to them. During a time of love, sharing, caring, and giving, they feel unloved, have no one who can share with or care about them, and believe they have nothing to give. We tend to think of those

victimized by holiday depression or

The holidays are an especially tough time to be alone, sick - either mentally or physically, or down on your luck, all of which can make a



blues as people with virtually no real family or friends, maybe even some homeless, down-on-their-luck individuals. But, the feelings of loneliness, desolation, and desperation that are part of depression can be inside a person, whether he or she is alone in life or has family and friends. It is a certain lack of inner, spiritual strength and belief that is not bound by race, sex, culture, or income.

People with holiday depression are at a crossroads in their lives: whether to move on, taking things one day at a time or to take that permanent solution to a temporary problem. Talking things out with counselors, ministers or some other person of trust; getting involved in positive ways that will shift the individual's focus from self-pity to self-worth may help. But, the ultimate decision as to which direction to take is strictly personal. person feel excluded and lonely. But, the irony of holiday depression is that, in Christian theology, Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the Son of the Spiritual Being who gives the inner strength to get past depression. When there is no hand of human kindness held out to take yours, the Hand of God is always there.

Believing firmly in that certainty is the difference between being alone and being lonely. There is a big difference. Society seems to view as a sort of selfish pariah, anyone who is not in tandem with someone else, who is alone. So much is centered around the family that it's not hard to understand why some succumb to the holiday blues. If you're alone, you must be lonely and an object of pity. But, you can be part of a couple or family and still be lonely - depressingly, desperately lonely. It's all a matter of taking charge again of your life and your emotions. If you matter to no one else, you matter to the One Who created you. Whatever talent you have been given, you have an obligation to use it, to share it in some way with others. Every human being has something to contribute, no matter how great c. small. And that contribution counts.

Reaching a crossroad, whether because of holiday depression or other events in your life, is an opportunity for positive change. Make it count for something positive. You owe it to the natural order of God's world.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR A POSITIVE NEW YEAR!



