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Season's Greetings

Women prone to holiday blues

Alternatives to traditional holiday festivities are especially needed for women who feel overworked and alienated during the season, said a women's minister and family counselor.

Women sometimes feel alienated by Christian theology, which dominates the holiday season, said Danahy Sharonrose who has taught a workshop at the Asherah Sanctuary in Eugene for the last two years titled "Reclaiming the Holidays: Creating Alternate Holiday Happiness."

"Women may not notice on a conscious level that the holiday we celebrate worships a male god and we give honor to a male child," Sharonrose said. "This male symbolism may help women feel alienated and unrepresented."

Single women are especially prone to feeling lonely and depressed during the holidays, she said.

"The picture is that you go home to the family for the holidays, but not every woman has a biological family that she relates to, or is in a relationship with," Sharonrose said.

The holidays can also be a very lonely time for lesbians and bisexual women, she said.

"Due to prejudice, a family might no longer welcome them," Sharonrose said. "Some lesbian couples may be forced to choose to be with their family or their partner because the partner isn't welcome in the home."

Women often feel overworked

and tense during the holidays because their traditional female role as caretaker is accentuated, Sharonrose said.

"The meals, the party preparations, gift buying and wrapping is often put on women," she said.

"Our culture has taught us that we're supposed to party, run around and be very active at this time of year, and this is especially true for women," she said.

This constant, frantic action is contradictory to what the holiday season was originally intended to celebrate, Sharonrose said.

"It was originally about honoring the darkness of winter and celebrating the return of the sun," she said. "It is a time to be quiet, turn inward and slow down."

Sharonrose said women should tailor the holiday season to fit their own needs and beliefs.

"Think about how you'd like to spend the time," she said. "You don't have to celebrate the holidays the same old way."

Some women are abandoning Christian theology, and the commercialization that accompanies the holiday season, and are turning to ancient Earth religions that honor seasonal changes and goddesses.

Sharonrose said women should create their own traditions instead of following ones that depress them.

"If you are a lesbian, rather than leave your partner behind, you might want to create a more supportive family for yourself from among your friends," she said.

"Act out what brings you enjoyment. Holiday traditions are so institutionalized. Our minds get stuck thinking there is only one way to celebrate"

*Danahy Sharonrose
Holiday Workshop Teacher*

She suggests staying in town and volunteering at a homeless shelter or inviting people to a potluck.

"Act out what brings you enjoyment," Sharonrose said. "Holiday traditions are so institutionalized that our minds get stuck thinking there is only one way to celebrate."


For example, eating and drinking are big holiday traditions, but many women have eating disorders, or are alcoholics.

"Go Christmas caroling, or do something active," she said.

She also suggests that single women get together on Christmas morning for an organized hike or a walk.

"You're not the only one that's alone," she said. "When we take action, not only do we discover a fun way to spend the time but we empower ourselves and we quit feeling like victims."

By Mara Stine



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