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Holidays, Business Owners, and Depression

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In September 2013 I wrote about one of the most [under-diagnosed problems that business owners face, depression](#). The response has been amazing. We know that a lot of business owners are struggling with feelings of fear, inadequacy, stress, and depression. The holiday season, with added time constraints and added pressure to make enough money for the year, can increase these feelings. Family and financial issues cause a lot of people in all professions to get depressed this time of year.

Depression is different for everyone, but we wanted to find some general ideas for helping you get through this difficult time of year. Many people

suggested that it is important to be kind to yourself this time of year. Don't put unneeded pressure on yourself to live up to last year's New Year's Resolutions and start a new diet or beat yourself up over a missed workout. That being said, take care of yourself. Eating right, exercising and sleeping will help your mood, as will scheduling time with friends and family (assuming your family isn't part of your stress). It may be difficult to take time off this time of year, but even an hour spent doing something you love can help with feelings of stress and burn out.

[Life and business coach Cara Maksimow](#) suggests staying in touch not just with friends but with other entrepreneurs and business owners throughout the year as a way of preventing the isolation that often comes with depression. "Keeping connected to other small business owners through professional organizations or local groups and chambers can be helpful. Sharing best practices with others and validating the experiences you are having can go a long way to increasing resilience and motivation."

April Masini of the [Ask April advice column](#) thinks depression can sometimes be a good thing, or at least, not a horrible thing. Masini urges business owners, and others, to think of depression as "an opportunity to re-examine your goals and readjust if you'd like. It's important to understand the difference between feelings and behavior, and if you feel lousy, that's one thing, but if you allow yourself to wallow in it, that's a second issue. Feeling badly that you didn't meet goals is okay, and you shouldn't beat yourself up for feeling depressed when your expectations fall short of reality. In fact, feeling badly when you come up short is a healthy sign. It means you're reality based, and people who are reality based can succeed. It's

those who deny reality or hide from it, who have problems with success. Use the opportunity to understand the catalyst for your depression, so you can readjust goals. Whether it's closing down the business to cut your losses, or re-framing a marketing strategy, depression, at it's best, opens the window to change."

If you find yourself struggling, or thinking about harming yourself or others, it's important to take action. Consider reaching out to a crisis center in your area.

Marta Segal Block is a social media and content marketing consultant specializing in small businesses. You can read more of her work and random thoughts on [Advice from Marta](#) and [Facebook](#) and follow her on [Twitter](#).

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