

Tips to survive Xmas dramas

DESPITE the festivities, Christmas can be a sad, lonely and frustrating time for many people.

With over 80 per cent of Australians suffering from depression at some stage in their lives, emotional fitness expert, Gayla Maxwell, says that many people have huge expectations during the Christmas period, and regardless of these being fulfilled or not, can come crashing down.

“Christmas is the one time of the year when families are often forced together and are supposed to put on a happy face. However, tempers can erupt, grievances aired, and often this time of forced celebration can accentuate a person’s negative emotions,” she says.

“The pressure of having to buy presents, pay off credit card debt, play hostess, or entertain family members can put high emotional demands on many individuals and families.”

Gayla Maxwell, emotional fitness expert and author of *Permission to Dance One Step at a Time* has for the past two

decades worked with individuals around the world, assisting them to remain balanced emotionally and offers the following tips for avoiding negative feelings at this time of year:

Manage your own expectations.

“Whether you expect the worst or you’re hoping this year is the one where the family finally avoids the childish bickering, be aware that expectation is the father of all disappointment. Make sure that your only expectation is that you will bring your best to the Christmas table and assume that others are doing their best also. Let go of the rest!” says Gayla.

The greatest gift you can give another is your happiness. “Laugh!” says Gayla, “Laugh at the family issues. Laugh at yourself. Laugh because you can. Laughter produces “happy” chemicals in the brain that tell your whole body that you’re doing great and all is well with the world! It is powerfully healing and brings out the best in anyone!”