

# HOW TO RELIEVE THE SUNDAY BLUES

## An Interview With Robert Leahy

*Leahy is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Cornell Medical School and the author of The Worry Cure: Seven Steps to Stop Worry From Stopping You (Three Rivers Press).*

People get depressed at the end of a weekend because they feel like something good is coming to an end, and the stress of the workweek is about to start. Keep in mind that almost everyone feels this way from time to time.

- **Limit yourself.** Set aside ten minutes

at the end of the weekend to brood, but be strict with yourself—that's all the time for negative thinking you're allowed. People are under the misguided notion that ruminating is going to lead to clarity, but the more you dwell on how bad you feel, the more depressed you become.

- **Take action.** Be proactive—go shopping, take the dog for a walk, visit a museum. Just get out of the house and your own head for an hour or two.

- **Reach out to friends.** Meet a friend for a cup of coffee (a glass of wine might make the malaise worse). Unless you have a specific problem to discuss, focus on positive, happy discourse—you'll be surprised how that can facilitate a good mood.

- **Remember the good times.** Think about the most enjoyable thing you did over the weekend and make plans to do it again, even if it was just going out for Mexican food and a movie. It's a good idea to make plans for Wednesday night so you can have a midweek break to look forward to.

- **Plan your workload.** Instead of fretting generally about the coming week—long hours, stress, and meetings—make a list of everything you have to get done. Your tasks will immediately seem more manageable.

(Writing is usually more effective than thinking about it.) Also, jot down what's going to be pleasurable about the week ahead, like lunch with an old friend. If you know it's going to be a particularly brutal week, think about ways to reduce stress—delegate work, move back a deadline if possible—so you know the boredom and frustration won't last forever.