



Pressure's on for Barack to beat the blues

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'Contagion of happiness'

Washingtonians, beware: All the inaugural-related revelry and celebration you might be feeling over the weekend could be squashed come Monday, and not from an inaugural ball hang-over.

Jan. 19, or the third Monday in the month, has been deemed by many researchers as "Blue Monday" -- the most depressing day of the year. A combination of cold weather, holiday credit card bills and broken New Year's resolutions creates what "happiness expert" **Caroline Adams Miller** calls "the perfect storm of events for depression."

Miller, who holds a masters from University of Pennsylvania in positive psychology, explains that although history holds this Monday as a sad one, **Barack Obama's** inauguration and his message of hope will act as a "positive offsetting."

"It's the idea of a contagion of happiness," Miller explains. "Being around happy and hopeful people makes you feel happier and more proactive." Lucky for us locals, our close proximity to the "center of hope" may give us a one-up on the rest of the country this Monday, because we'll feel this hopefulness "more robustly."

But don't worry if you have to leave Washington, that hot-bed of hope: Obama's leadership style may be contagious to the whole country. Miller cited studies that have shown that "people respond to the positive mood of a leader ... the more positive your manager, the more productive the staff." (Try telling that to your boss the next time you get yelled at.) President-elect Obama's "bodes well for the self and the country," she said.

But Obama is human too (he is, right?), so what happens when he starts to get the blues? Miller had a few suggestions for the future president, many which we've already seen in action. Along with his current exercise habit and socializing, Miller recommends keeping a journal and savoring happy memories.

