

POINTS OF Possibility



Ten Tips to Avoid Another Family Holiday Meltdown

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The holidays are upon us once again. A time when we come together with family and friends to reconnect, break bread, and reflect on both the year past and the year ahead.

While this should be a time of joyful celebration, the holidays can spark feelings of anxiety, disenchantment, and even dread. For many families, meltdowns during the holidays are so common that, that as soon as the skeletons and jack-o'-lanterns of Halloween are gone, unhappy memories, financial obligations, among other nightmares, flood in.

While you can't always control other people or events, you can take a step back and choose how you can respond rather than react. To help you keep the peace in the family this holiday season, here are some tips:

“With a little forethought and a shift in thinking, this holiday season with your family can be the best ever.”

- 1** **First, relax!** Family holidays are supposed to be fun, not perfectly choreographed performances. Things will go wrong. People will show up late, forget to bring the pie, even throw out a snide remark or two. If you are prepared ahead of time for things like this to happen, you will be much more relaxed, and accepting, come what may.
- 2** Avoid looking for something to be upset about. Instead, **look for things you appreciate**. Even if it's just one thing—the party, the food, another one of uncle Fred's crazy stories, or just the festive ambiance of the season.
- 3** Understand that no one has a monopoly on the truth. It's really all in the eye of each beholder. Everyone has a different perspective on a subject. All too often, we behave as if what we believe is the only "truth," and everyone else is mistaken (at best) or moronic (at worst)—starting to ring a bell? This is perhaps the most dangerous attitude to bring to any family function, especially a holiday celebration.

- 4** Practice attentive listening. Instead of letting negative comments or distractions run through your head, try to really hear what the speaker is saying and how they see things from their perspective. Before you shut it down, honestly, give it a try. It makes a world of difference.
- 5** Don't give advice to anybody unless they specifically ask you for it. Nobody likes being told what to do or being made to feel inferior to others.
- 6** Don't take things personally. When others say things that seem critical, they, in most cases, are not trying to upset you—it's their issue, not yours.
- 7** Family relations are just more intense. We get it; a certain look, a raised eyebrow, or even that wrongly uttered word can set off a chain reaction of emotions. It's important to remember that these feelings are often caused by unresolved conflicts from our past. When you feel things start to shift, stop. Take a moment and try to gain control of your emotions. Do your best to avoid reacting. What's happening now, in the moment, is not the same as what may have happened previously.
- 8** Maintain your own emotional boundaries and avoid letting yourself get caught up in the middle of someone else's conflict. Why take on more drama? If it doesn't concern you, don't let it affect you.
- 9** Traditions are an important part of family holiday celebrations. While some enjoy experimenting and creating new family traditions, others prefer to maintain things as they were. Be flexible, generous, and open to new ideas, especially when the party is at another family member's home. When the party is at your home, do it your way.
- 10** Release your expectations on how you think an event should go. Ever notice that when you expect something to fall apart, it usually does? Instead, try to envision a fun, positive outcome! Or, better yet, don't expect any outcome at all. Go into the holidays with an open heart and mind. Take what comes moment by moment. Staying present is one of the best ways to remain calm and enjoy yourself.

Don't forget to take time for yourself and always come back to love. After all, it's family, right? We've always got their back. ☺

BONUS, BONUS TIP: *Share these ideas with your family and your friends! Enjoy!*

