



How to deal with difficult family this holiday season.

1 Dec 2016

The holiday season can strike dread into the hearts of some (or is that many). "Oh no, that means I have to listen to Uncle Stewart's endless stories about the war and how lucky we have it today. And then sister Jeannette and her husband will spend most of the days yelling and screaming at one another. Not to forget little brother who will dig out all manner of creepy crawlies and deposit them in your lap when you are not looking. And then there is Aunt Mavis who is perpetually rolling her eyes at everyone, sending out looks of disapproval about anything and everything, and ranting on and on about what is wrong with the government, the youth, the economy, the rich, the poor", and so on. You get it. Hey maybe you are even one of these characters yourself! But how do you stop your much looked forward to time of rest and relaxation from turning into a holiday from hell.

1. You can only manage your own behaviour. So forget about trying to control others. You can't do it no matter how much you would like to. What you can do however, is through managing your own actions you can influence others. So pay attention to what you do. Act, don't react.
2. Set your boundaries. Decide what behaviour you will absolutely not accept, and decide how you will respond to such behaviour. If someone is rude or abusive then calmly tell them, "I feel what you have said is rude/abusive and that is not an acceptable way to act".
3. You can choose not to let people affect you. Choose that option. Don't take their stuff onto you.
4. Be kind and polite. You do not have to spend your entire life with these people. So try and be kind. Try and look for, and focus on, the good in people.
5. Decide you are going to enjoy yourself.
6. Don't start conversations around sensitive topics that will just lead to fights. Steer clear of them. You don't have to contribute your opinions to every topic.
7. You usually can always walk away from something you don't want to get involved in. Sometimes this is a good option.
8. Have an escape day planned for when people are just becoming too much and you need a respite from family. You could schedule a visit with a friend and go and do something fun for the day just to get away from it all for a time.

If you are looking to make 2017 your best year yet, then the December break is a good time to spend a few days (1-3 days) on your own personal development. (You can get all the material in one go instead of weekly.)



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