

4 Tips to Manage Family Conflict During the Holidays



The holidays offer great opportunities to reconnect with family members who you may not have seen over the year. But, this time can be extremely stressful, especially when there is family conflict and drama at get-togethers. It is never easy to deal with these situations, but we have compiled a list of helpful tips to get you through family drama a little easier this holiday season.

1) Start with An Outward Mindset

The definition of an Outward Mindset is simple. It is a way of seeing people as people who matter like we do. Simply seeing everyone in the room and at the dinner table as a person can drastically change our perspective of them and the situation. So, before attending the family dinner or holiday function, make mental notes about how to approach the conversations and people present. If it makes it easier, map it out on a piece of paper.

What type of things might they be facing right now?

How might we act or approach this get together if our mindsets were outward?

What kinds of things would be likely to happen?

Remember, being outward doesn't mean you ignore your own thoughts and feelings. It means you understand that everyone has their own thoughts and feelings, just like you.

2) Ask Yourself, Is it Worth it?

If we learn anything from the influence pyramid, it's that teaching and correcting are not effective unless the foundation of the relationship is built on an outward mindset. When there are disagreements, competing world views, or uncomfortable comments, consider the possible responses and outcomes. Becoming frustrated and responding with anger will likely only add fuel to the fire and escalate the conflict.

Changing someone's mind doesn't happen in one conversation (argument) during Thanksgiving dinner. So before jumping into your thesis statement, consider your mindset and ask yourself, is it worth it? If it's not, is there anything you could learn?

3) Aim to Learn, Not Justify

After years of research in the psychology of human behavior, we have come to an interesting conclusion. We *like* the conflict we have with other people. It sounds crazy. Who likes conflict?

The answer is in how it makes us feel. When someone continues to fit the negative view we have towards them, our negative thoughts towards them become justified. This ultimately allows us to believe they will never change, and we can disengage from thinking of them as a person.

When we aim to learn something from those we may be at odds with, we get to understand them more. Even if we don't agree with them, it will break down a barrier so we are no longer

focusing on the conflict, but on the person.

4) Know Your Inward Styles

If we want to have an outward mindset, we need to know what it looks like to have an inward mindset. We live and act with an inward mindset when we cannot see the needs and challenges of other people. We see them as objects. This, of course, is easier to fall into in a family setting.

To avoid the temptation to turn inward—to notice when we turn inward—we need to be prepared to know what our inward styles are. Which of these views sound like you at a family gathering? Do they change depending on the person you're with?

Different family members and situations can evoke varying emotions and feelings, so you don't have to choose just one. Once you have found the 1 or 2 that best describe you, ask yourself these questions:

What is it like to be around me when I feel this way?

What are my reactions or responses when I am feeling _____ (Fill in the blank)?

What is a possible solution to changing my mindset when these feelings occur?

Discover more about your inward styles by taking our free [Mindset Assessment](#).

Again, being outward doesn't necessarily mean suppressing feelings. But, when we recognize our feelings and identify when our mindset turns inward, we learn to see ourselves and others more clearly.

Remember, no one is fully inward or fully outward. We all fall somewhere in between the two mindsets depending on the situations we are facing. So don't feel bad or guilty when it

feels like an inward mindset is a natural way of seeing people. Progress is better than perfection, so keep at it!