



11 tips for surviving your family Christmas

Family relationships often turn the festive season into the most stressful time of year. You have worked hard this year so let SUE LESTER show you how to claim back your recharge time.

Love them or hate them, they are your family, but just because it is the festive season it doesn't mean they will suddenly become that perfect family you see portrayed in the media. Ensure you can relax and recharge during the festive season by following these relationship management tips:

- 1.** Leave the past where it belongs, your version of it only exists in your imagination. Expecting others to remember exactly as you do, agree with your perspective and even apologise is setting yourself up for serious disappointment. Learn from the experience and stop letting it cause you pain by reliving it.
- 2.** If you are going to imagine a future event or conversation, a "What if?", make it how you would LIKE it to be. Feel the difference. This sets you up for a better outcome as you have focussed on positive solutions, not verbal hand grenades and protective barriers. Rather than immediately bristle into attack or defensive mode when they walk into the room, you will stay neutral.
- 3.** Know that people do change over time, and it's okay if you no longer think the same. It simply means your values have changed, and that makes neither of you wrong, just different.
- 4.** There is no need to get into heated arguments, just say, "Interesting point of view" (no sarcasm please). Then change the subject, offer to refresh the drinks, or take a toilet break. You are both right in your own realities.

5. Whoever gets angry loses. Angry drunks are the biggest losers. If you are quick to explode or implode, then you need to seek help before the festive season to shed that excess negative emotion and allow yourself to remain calmly assertive.

6. Remember the wise words of Eleanor Roosevelt: "No one can make you feel inferior without your permission." Be aware of how your self-talk is programming you to act, e.g. as a shy person, or as a weak-willed person who 'can't say no' to chocolate or another drink. Is your unconscious blueprint™ empowering or disempowering you, and others?

7. If you want others to treat you better, you will need to treat yourself better first. Reset and maintain your boundaries, say 'No'. Be prepared for any initial resistance by being clear on why it is important to you, and have potential alternative solutions for them.

8. Be aware of love languages, and that gifts are crucial to some, while others feel more loved when you spend time in conversations, or make time to visit and give hugs. How do you most feel loved?

9. Is your unconscious blueprint™ i.e. your internal images, of yourself or others keeping you stuck in past relationship dynamics? Is it time to update, and relate as adults?

10. If you have been waiting for the right moment to have 'that' talk with your partner, know the right time isn't the first day of your

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holiday away! Allowing him or her at least a few days to unwind and relax will give you both a greater chance of re-connecting. Spend those days depositing into your relationship's emotional bank account, not preparing for battle.

11. Allow yourself, your partner and children to play and have fun – create happy memories. This investment pays dividends your whole lives. It is pure gold.

If you read any of these tips and thought, "That'd be great, BUT...", then know the 'but' is technically 'head trash'. Know there are ways you can clear your head trash to create the loving relationships and harmonious home and workplace you desire.

It all starts with you, because you are the only person you can change. Your positive changes to how you feel and behave then have a ripple effect out across all areas of your life, including your health, business and finances. ■

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