

## **Five Mantras to Help You Survive A Family Gathering This Holiday**

Let's be honest: holiday time with family does not always (often?) look like something out of a Hallmark Christmas movie. There are bad histories, old grudges and deeply held resentments that often get trotted out when families gather around a turkey or other large fowl.

### **I am not what others think of me.**

Your value and worth are not determined by other people's opinions, approval or acceptance. It is not based on the job, the number of kids or the type of relationship that others think you should have. You know what you're doing. You can like (and even love) who you are without anyone else's approval, you beloved child of God, you.

### **Other people's happiness is not my responsibility.**

This doesn't mean you delight in making others miserable, just that you refuse to shoulder the burden of people's unhappiness. If your mother has *never* liked any Christmas gift you have given her, chances are it's not because you are a bad gift-giver. If your father-in-law complains incessantly about having to do yard work and then refuses your offer to help, then his need to complain is greater than his need for assistance. If your family is disappointed with your choice of career/partner/place of residence or if they are distressed by your lack of children/retirement plan/real furniture, that's on them, not on you.

### **I will not expect people to be different.**

Don't go in to the situation with unrealistic expectations. Your racist family members have probably not gotten woke over the course of the year. Your passive aggressive aunt has not been reading self-help books, and your alcoholic cousin will most likely get drunk and pick a fight with someone. Don't be disappointed because people are who they've always been.

### **I am smart, strong and capable.**

Time with toxic relatives can make you feel like you are incapable of making good decisions and that your life is a total mess. All of our lives are a little messy, but that doesn't mean we are disasters. You got this.

### **I have awesome people in my life**

If your holiday plans call for spending time with people who drain you, make it a priority to spend time with those who lift you up, encourage you and love the weird little hats/glasses/socks you wear. Spend time with friends you have chosen to call family.