

Make this a Safe Conversations holiday

The holiday season is loaded with expectation and anxiety. Coming off the stress of work and social intensity, we are often the most vulnerable to our buttons being pushed. And let's face it, our family knows what triggers us most!

This year, try a new way of being in relationship. Here are some tips to bringing connection, full aliveness and joy into your holiday gatherings.



Where to begin

Create Safety

Set an expectation for Zero Negativity – and create a non-judgmental signal for when something lands as negative.

Share your appreciation

Build connection up front by thanking each person for making time in their busy lives to be together..

As you gather

Listen with intention

Mirror – and ask if you've got what's being said. *"Wow, that's amazing. Let me see if I got that. You said... Did I get that?"*

Express curiosity

"Tell me more!"

Validate with authenticity

No matter whether you agree, it's important to remember that everyone makes sense. Imagine what would happen if, instead of responding with a rebuttal, you validate! *"Hey, you know, when you say it like that, you really make sense."*

Empathize when needed

Offer true connection by imagining how another person must feel. *"I imagine you must feel.... Is there more about how it feels?"*

When the going gets tough

Confrontations are bound to occur when we gather with our loved ones. When you experience a rupture, request time together to explore the topic that's triggered you. *"Maybe there'd be a good time for us to talk more about this topic. Now? Later?"*

Have Fun!

Laugh

Ask if you can share a funny story about holidays past. Laughing banishes negativity, in a heartbeat.

Love

After you connect, make contact with each other. Hug, High Five or shake hands and say: *"Hey, thanks for sharing. Being connected means a lot to me."*

Be loved

Offer an Appreciation as a post-dinner party game. Pair up and take turns. Sender: *"This year, I really appreciate you for..."*
Receiver Mirrors: *"So if I got that, you appreciate me for..."*
There is nothing more profound than actively hearing a word of positive about yourself. And even greater is the gift of offering the Appreciation.

Even if friends or family members don't know the **Safe Conversations** process, you can model the tools - *Mirror*, *Validate* and *Empathize* - to bring the heat of the moment down and move the conversation toward connection.

Safe Conversations

A new way of being in relationship.

Talk without criticism

Listen without judgment

Connect – beyond your differences

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