

THE HOLIDAYS

Are you 'coming or going' ?

PRE – VISIT

Getting ready ...

DURING – VISIT

Ways you can help visitors
feel more at home

AND YOU ...

So how do YOU ?????

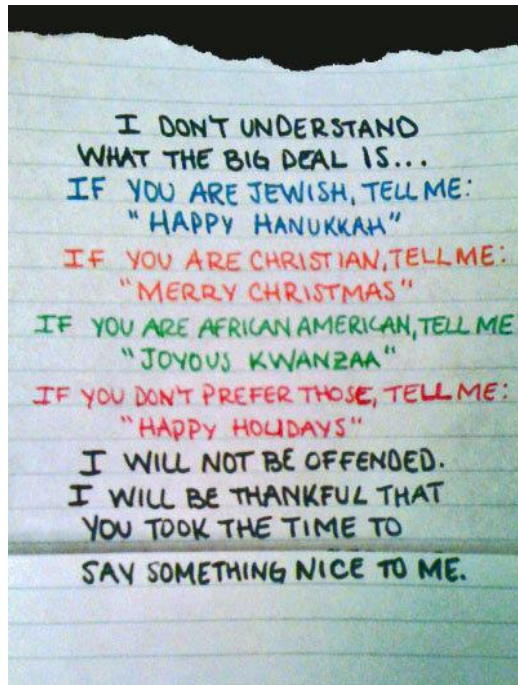
There's this idea that holiday gatherings with family are supposed to be joyful and stress-free. That's not the case. Family relationships are complicated. But that doesn't mean that the solution is to skip the holidays entirely.

The holidays offer plenty of reasons to be stressed out and anxious -- the gifts you haven't wrapped, the pile of cookie exchange invites, the office parties. But for many, the biggest source of holiday stress is family -- the family dinner, the obligations, and the burden of family tradition.



One of the best things about the holidays is seeing the headlights of family members coming up the driveway to visit.

The second best thing about the holidays is seeing their tail-lights as they drive away.



Final suggestion for surviving the holidays

Have a sense of humor because it's better to laugh at the commotion instead of breaking something.

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Be yourself.
No one can say
you're doing it
wrong.

Charles M. Schulz

THE HOLIDAYS

Are you 'coming or going' ?



With holiday family reunions looming in your calendar, you may not know if you are 'coming or going' what are some ways that you can prepare yourself and cope better this season?



PRE – VISIT

Getting ready ...

Declutter your home

- With a few extra people in your home, you are going to need some additional room. It's time to declutter; create some much needed space

Spring cleaning for the holidays

- Even though it's not spring, before the holidays is a terrific time to do some spring cleaning. Clean one room at a time in the weeks preceding the arrival of your guests

Do house repairs

- A few small house repairs and improvements can make your home safer and more comfortable for your holiday houseguests.

Childproof your home

- If babies or children are among your houseguests, it's time to do some simple childproofing: keep all cleaning products, knives, medications, and other potential hazards in a locked cabinet or out of reach

Prepare the guest room

- Make sure all the bedding is fresh, vacuum the floor, and make space in the closet for your guests' clothes. Provide clean towels and supplies in the bathroom and let them know where to find more. Make the room cozy with a sitting area, if possible. This will allow them to read, use the computer, and lounge in private.

Cook ahead

- Who wants to spend all your time in the kitchen when you have houseguests? Cook ahead and freeze some meals for dinner. Keep breakfast simple (cereal, granola and yogurt, or fresh fruit).

Lay down ground rules

- If your guests are staying for an extended period of time, you may want to communicate some ground rules before their arrival. Of course, this should be in a lighthearted, pleasant way.

Decorate

- Prepare by decorating a little early. Keep things simple and elegant to avoid cluttering up your home.

Check the itinerary

- The day before your guests arrive, double check their itinerary. If they are staying for more than a weekend, recommend a rental car

Relax

- Although entertaining guests can be stressful at the holidays, it can be a lot of fun too. Relax and de-stress a bit before their arrival. Get some "me" time in before it's too late.

DURING – VISIT

Ways you can help visitors
feel more at home

Make your spouse/children a priority over guests

- Don't say "no" to your family so you can say "yes" to your guests..... **DO NOT GIVE UP YOUR BEDROOM, DO NOT MAKE YOUR CHILDREN GIVE UP THEIR BEDROOM.** Communicate with your family and work out a compromise about who, what, when, where and how to spend the holidays.

Keep your immediate family's time sacred

- This can be challenging, depending on the situation, but do your best to still spend some quality time with just those in your household.

Be sensitive to needs for private space

- Having visitors and a full house during the holiday season is common. This can be particularly stressful for adolescents in the family.

Have a spare key made

- Tell guests where it will be hidden (if they'll arrive while you're out) or hand it over when they get there, so they aren't ringing the doorbell every time they return.

Leave important phone numbers

- Put together a list of emergency contacts in case something happens while you're out. Give the name and number of a neighbor, family member, —anyone whom guests might need in a pinch.

Write down household instructions

- How does the remote control work? What's the deal with that alarm system? Give guests some pointers in case they're stumped while you're gone.

Be yourself

- Truly. Most house guests aren't expecting a perfectly immaculate house, and if they are, there's no point in loading your shoulders with the pressure to try. The best guests are there to see you, not you on stage.

Let your guests be themselves

- Really mean it when you say, "*make yourself at home.*" If you're willing to have guests, be willing to let them put their feet up on your coffee table. This is within reason, of course – don't let manipulative people treat you like a doormat.

AND YOU ...

So how do YOU ?????

Your spouse/children come first.

When you get married or choose have a partner, it's time to grow up and leave your parents. And, when you have children, it is time to grow up and "act/play WITH your child" (NOT LIKE A CHILD)

Set boundaries

There are many things that happen in marriage that are no one else's business. Avoid sharing the household secrets with others. Discuss with your spouse/children what topics and areas of your life are off limits to others.

Establish ground rules

When do you and your spouse have exclusive time for each other? When do you spend time with your extended family? Where should you discuss your marital conflicts?

Recognize the culture.

Our culture and upbringing plays a major role in how we do marriage. Recognize the cultural aspects of your spouse's upbringing.

Don't criticize your spouse's relationship with their family or parents.

Nothing can raise a spouse's defenses faster than criticism. Seek to understand more about their relationship rather than criticize, as that can lead to bitterness and resentment.

Be polite

This doesn't mean you have to change your personality to please your extended family or in-laws, but respect rules and traditions that are important to the older generation. Being polite and respectful with in-laws will go a long way in improving the relationship — not only with your in-laws, but your spouse and children as well.

Develop code words

You and your spouse may have a good relationship with each other's parents and family. Even so, there are still times when they drive you a bit crazy. Develop some code words to lighten the mood whenever the family is getting too annoying. Have fun with this one, but remember to remain respectful as derogatory code words will only cause more problems.

Spend time with your extended family

Develop a better relationship with your family members by doing things together. Find out what they enjoy and join them -- shopping, playing golf, cards, whatever. You may find you have more in common than you thought.