

## Adult Sibling Rivalry and the Holidays

This popular article has been republished many times in online magazines. It's one of my favorites because the advice is not only relevant for the holidays, but for any family gathering. Coming home for the holidays is something that many adults look forward to every year. Seeing family and friends evokes childhood memories and provides inspiration for good times in a homey atmosphere.

However, some memories may include lingering animosity and resentment between siblings. Relationship fractures within the family may stem from sibling issues which began during childhood, while some conflicts may have formed after siblings reached adulthood. It's important for siblings to be able to share in family festivities, but it's equally important not to make every family function a war zone. So what's the best way to deal with unresolved sibling issues during the holidays? Here are a few tips to help adult siblings bypass the rivalries to have successful family gatherings:

1 – Remember you're a "short timer" – Your time with your siblings for the holidays is only temporary and in just a few days (or even hours), you'll be on your way. Try to keep this in mind and remain positive as you navigate your way through the family minefield. Keep reminding yourself that you're strong enough to handle anything temporarily.

2 – No therapy sessions – if you've had unresolved sibling issues for ten years, hold out for ten years and one week or however long you've set aside for the family holiday visit. While it's good to work through family problems, releasing your pent-up emotions over Christmas dinner is probably not the most effective way to advance a positive agenda. Keep things simple and light and bring your holiday spirit.

3 – Separate yourself – If it's too difficult to stay under one roof, then don't. Make plans to stay with other friends or relatives during your visit, even if you only spend one or two nights away. If you know you'll need a break away from your sibling(s), then make sure it's incorporated into your scheduled visit.

4 – Plan to have fun – Believe it or not, your attitude is something that you have absolute and complete control over. Your siblings may be responsible for pushing your buttons, but only you are responsible for your reactions. Make the decision to have a good time and stick with it. When things get tough, remember survival tip number one -it's only temporary.

5 – Be considerate of other family members – A tense atmosphere can ruin it for everyone. Something important to always keep in mind is that family dynamics can change suddenly. It would be unfortunate if the last holiday when the entire family (mother, father, grandparents) was able to be together was ruined because of petty bickering, conflict and sibling rivalry.

6 – Be a role model for the kids – Unfortunately, adults with sibling conflicts can affect the relationship between their children. At family get-togethers, childhood memories are now being created for the children. Do your part to make them happy memories. They'll appreciate it and hopefully pass on the importance of family, especially around the holidays.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday!

Written by Nina Guilbeau