



# **Don't lose your Holiday Cheer, Just W.A. I.T.**


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push button and wait  
for signal opposite

**WAIT**







It's the most wonderful time of the year...to either love or loathe our families. We all gather around the table questioning what Uncle Ed will say and whether Grandma will shoot him the death glance or wink in approval. I don't know about your family, but in my family politics and religion are usually part of the main dinner courses. Of course, the more alcohol is involved the feistier the conversations become. But this holiday season before you drop your two cents in and go head to head with Uncle Ed, just W.A.I.T.

This acronym also works great at holiday parties around those not so lovely co-workers. You know, the ones who are annoying around the water cooler but even more intolerable after a few holiday cocktails. If you would like your mental health to survive these not so festive parts of the season, it's highly recommended to fight the natural urge to speak and share by asking yourself -

“WHY AM I TALKING?” When we hear a comment that we disagree with, our natural urge is to combat it with persuasion. As an important element of human communication, we believe that if we can get the other side to see our perspective then ultimately, we will win them over. But we fail to understand that human beings naturally resist persuasion instead of embracing it. We were given an innate gift to be concerned about deception. Hence, you will never convince Uncle Ed or that crazy co-worker that their way of thinking is incorrect by adding fuel to the fire.

Instead try a more inquisitive, less threatening approach to foster a more productive conversation (P.S. this works on social media too!). When starting a conversation with a fellow human, whether it be personal or professional, you need to listen mindfully with compassion and acceptance. Listening mindfully means that you don't listen to react but instead listen to hear the words and the meanings that come with them. This is where empathy comes into play: The human emotion that allows us to listen and understand in a respectful way in order to, build a foundation of trust and rapport. Translation: When Uncle Ed or that co-worker is off on their tangent don't interrupt by saying, “You're being ridiculous!”

During any conversation, but especially heated ones, always pay attention to facial expressions, body language, and other nonverbal cues. Being aware of these may just keep drinks out of your face or stuffing from flying across the table. To prevent any other food flying mishaps, it's good to be mindful of never overwhelming the other party with your opinions. Instead, ask open-ended questions. By doing this you can reflect and reply by reframing what was said while interjecting your thoughts in the

rebuttal. Beginning with phrases like, “I think” or “I feel” are far less threatening and non-confrontational than starting with “You.”

Will using these strategies keep you from a drama-free holiday season? Probably not, but learning to W.A.I.T. will help you control how you react by making you proactive. That in itself is a foundation for a happier, healthier holiday.