

# How To Love Your Family Without Getting Pulled Into The Conflicts

Loving your family isn't always easy, especially if there's a lot of conflict. You may not be able to control what your family members do. But you don't have to get pulled into their conflicts, either. Here's what you can do to stay out of the fray...



## Sow Grace Where You Can

- \* **Focus on the good.** Compliment your family members for what they do well and encourage them in these pursuits.
- \* **Have conversation starters ready.** Some family members can be negative. Keep a list of conversation starters with you and use them to re-direct discussions that are going nowhere.
- \* **Be grateful.** If a family member prepared dinner, helped you out, or did another kind task for you, express your thanks.
- \* **Tell a sweet story.** When things get heated during a conversation, bring up a beloved memory and how much it meant to you.
- \* **Practice forgiveness.** Don't carry around old hurts from years past. If needed, confront your family member and move on.
- \* **Walk away.** If a family member is trying to bait you in an argument, change the subject or leave the room.
- \* **Pray during events.** As you interact with your family, ask God to give you wisdom and discernment on how to handle them.



## Set Up Healthy Boundaries

\* **Limit your time together.** You don't have to go away for an extended vacation with your family. Look for small blocks of time you could spend together, such as having dinner or attending a concert.

\* **Stop trying to "save" family members.** Whether it's drug addiction or another problem, let your loved ones make their own choices.

\* **Don't stand for abusive communication.** Screaming, yelling, or manipulating aren't acceptable communication methods. If someone you love uses these tactics, quickly end the conversation.

\* **Give yourself time to recover.** If spending time with family puts you in a funk, always plan for recovery time after interacting with them. You'll be happier and healthier for it!

\* **Communicate the consequences.** If your family member's bad behavior has gotten to you, create clear consequences and follow through on them. For example, "If you yell at me on the phone, Mom, I will hang up."

\* **Don't offer apologies.** Setting boundaries is an act of love for you and your family. You don't have to apologize or compromise. Your family will eventually accept your new boundaries if you stick to them for a season.

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## Change the Legacy

\* **Prepare for triggers.** Consider what triggers drama in your family and seek to avoid—or at least leave before—these triggers show up.

\* **Evaluate your past.** Think about what you want to do differently with your kids or your spouse. Ask yourself what patterns you want to change in the next generation.

\* **Stop playing the part.** If you're tired of always being the responsible one or the go-between, then don't do it anymore. Discovering (and changing) your role in your family's drama can be freeing.

\* **Surround yourself with healthy role models.** Who do you know that's raising an amazing family? Spend time with them and learn from their example.

\* **Read about relationships.** Understanding relationships can be eye-opening! A few good books to start with include: [The Five Love Languages](#) by Gary Chapman, [Boundaries](#) by Henry Cloud & John Townsend, and [The DNA of Relationships](#) by Gary Smalley.

\* **Seek counseling.** Healing from complicated family relationships is hard, but you don't have to do it alone. Look for a godly therapist who can walk with you during this time.

\* **Ask for prayer.** Choose a friend or two you trust not to gossip about your family and tell them what's going on. Request that they pray with *and* for you regularly.

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