

A group of diverse people are seated around a long wooden dining table in a restaurant. The table is set with a blue tablecloth, white plates of food, wine glasses, and a bottle of wine. A vase with greenery sits on the table. The background features a large, colorful floral wall tapestry. The overall atmosphere is warm and social.

H HUNDRED

LIFE DESIGN

**10 WAYS TO DEAL WITH YOUR
FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

You happily walk into your parents' warm, bright house and shake off the cold. The delicious smell of pie hits your nose. As you look around at the friendly familiar faces in the crowd, smiling and sending happy greetings left and right, your eyes happen upon someone you certainly did NOT expect to see...cousin Lenny. Cousin Lenny hasn't been to Thanksgiving in 5 years, but boy does he bring drama with him! Find out how to deal with cousin Lenny as well as nine more characters you're likely to deal with this holiday season!

THE DRAMA QUEEN/KING

This family member knows all the latest family gossip and will not hesitate to bring it up at the most inopportune times. He lives for drama. In fact you imagine he doesn't consider the holiday complete without bringing up all the elephants in the room and at least one argument. This guy or gal needs to be diffused before they get too far. We suggest jumping in with a joke, or offering food. Changing the topic is a popular method as well!

THE GUILT-TRIPPER

"You haven't gotten that promotion yet?!" "When are you guys going to have a baby?! You're not getting any younger." This family member doesn't hesitate to make you feel horrible about yourself and as if you have nothing going right in your life. You can be passive aggressive right back, but that's petty. Instead, address the issue head on. This person is generally not trying to start any issues, so they often will back down once you call their bluff and address what they're asking about.

THE ONE-UPPER

Everything you can do, she can do it better. Your new workplace has a pool table in the break room? Hers has an arcade room. With this person, it's best to smile and nod politely. Trust us, everyone else in the family knows her by now and knows her powers of exaggeration (plus, she works at the post office. Everyone knows she for sure does NOT have an arcade room there).





THE IT'S-ALL-ABOUT-ME

We all seem to have one of these. When the conversation turns to your childhood, he has to jump in with stories of his. He always seems to be talking over you. One way to get around this is to hold your train of thought, then the second he stops for a breath, jump back into your story starting with, “so, as I was saying....” Eventually he should get the hint.

THE OVER-THE-TOP JOKESTER

This is your boisterous uncle who loves to joke and tease, but he inevitably goes too far every so often, leading to hurt feelings or worse. The key in this situation is diffusing. If you know he honestly meant no harm, don't let the bad joke fester, address it and suggest maybe it was too much, but “hahaha that's Uncle Jim.” Be sure not to underestimate the feelings of the person who was teased or the butt of the joke, though.

THE OVERLY AFFECTIONATE

This is your sweet grandma who always hugs a little too hard for a little too long...so much so you're smelling her strong perfume as you're trying to enjoy dinner. Or your older brother who thinks you're still 5 and messes up your perfectly coiffed hair when he roughs it up. You need to take the lead with these family members....be the first one to extend greetings and back away before they can go too far. There's an art form to this one....you might not master it this year, but you'll get there!



IF YOU'RE THE ONE HOSTING THIS YEAR, YOU HAVE A WHOLE OTHER SET OF ISSUES TO DEAL WITH. HERE ARE SOME COMMON GUESTS YOU'LL ENCOUNTER, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

PEOPLE WHO MOVE AROUND YOUR STUFF

This person is the mother-in-law who feels the urge to rearrange your cupboards. Or the dad who sees your embarrassing 2nd grade school picture strategically hidden on your mantel and breaks out the hammer and hangs it up on the wall. They usually mean well, but overstep their boundaries. Either grin and bear it and move things back in place when they leave, or explain that their way seems good but you prefer your own way. (Although, you must admit, your mother-in-law does have amazing organizational skills. But you'll never let on that you think so!)

THE SNOOPER

This family member wants to know all your business, but goes about it in a roundabout way. They're the one going through your medicine cabinet and closet. Besides putting locks on your stuff, you have one of two options. Either hide away everything you don't want nosy people to see, or, put something completely awkward or weird like a scary clown costume in your top drawer for them to find.

THE HIGH-STANDARD GUEST

Nothing is ever good enough for this guest. You don't have the right kind of drinks, your fridge makes an annoying humming noise, heck even the thread count on the sheets is too low and why'd you get them in polyester?! These guests are almost never pleased, so again, either grin and bear it, or kindly suggest a hotel next time!

THE DOTING PARENT

Your sister and brother-in-law let their kids run rampant, all hopped up on pumpkin pie and eggnog, and then get annoyed at the slightest suggestion that they aren't behaving. The key here is to plan ahead and have some new small toys or activities available, and keep reminding yourself they'll leave eventually!

THE LATE GUEST

This guest is forever "almost there!!" Try telling this guest the occasion starts a half hour earlier than it really does. Then you won't have to deal with his, "Don't eat yet!!! I'm pulling up any minute now!" for 20 minutes.



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