

# INTERMEDIATE

## How to Deal with Difficult Family Members?



Learning how to deal with difficult family members can be one of the most challenging of all relationships. With outgrown or toxic friendships you can close the door and move on with your life.

You can't do that so easily with family members who are critical, negative, or controlling because they are family, flesh and blood. You can't just turn, walk away, and forget about difficult family members because they will always be there in your midst.

So what can you do? Here are a few tips on how to deal with difficult family members.

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#### 1. Change You, Not Them

Some people think that, with enough effort and time, they can change the behavior of a difficult person. However, to think you can change somebody is delusional thinking because you can not change anyone except yourself. You are a human being, not a god.

So how do you change yourself so you can more effectively deal with difficult family members?

First, change how you see the difficult family member through understanding their behavior. This understanding can be gained by talking to other family members to find out the reasons why.

And secondly, change how you react to that difficult family member.

If that person is pushing your buttons don't give them the satisfaction of provoking you, instead respond by saying something nice, maybe a compliment, or possibly even turning your hot button into a joke of some sort.

The point is to side step the difficult person's negativity.

#### 2. Employ Compassion

Using compassion to deal with a difficult family member is not the easiest thing in the world to do. Honestly, it can seem like nearly impossible especially if you have some resentment regarding the difficult family member's behavior.

However, you would probably have compassion if that difficult person was the member of someone else's family and you did not have to deal with them so much. That being the case, shouldn't that same compassion be extended to a difficult person in your family?

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#### 3. Check Yourself

Sometimes a difficult family member will mirror something that is also in you. Often we see behaviors in others that we don't like and often it is a behavior we don't like about ourselves.

At these times it's so easy for you to focus on the difficult person in order to avoid addressing that same behavior in yourself. But this tactic does no one any good, especially you because you deny yourself the opportunity of change and growth.

The next time you are dealing with a difficult family member look at yourself first before examining them. And if you fix you it could make the relationship much more pleasant and if it doesn't at least it will make you a better person.

#### 4. Be True and Sincere

In the context of dealing with a difficult family member, being true and sincere means not compromising your beliefs and feelings.

Maybe you did something for the difficult family member that you really didn't want to do. This will cause you regret and guilt, and then resentment toward the person you did it for.

This resentment will then taint your perception of that person and your relationship with them with negativity. That would be a shame as it will prevent you seeing the good aspects of the relationship.

So, the next time someone asks you to do something that you don't want to do be honest with sincerity and let them know the truth.

The bottom line in how to deal with difficult family members is to not try to change them, but change yourself in how you perceive them and how you react to that perception.