

Is It *Really* The Most Wonderful Time Of Year

Today's podcast is called "Is It *Really* The Most Wonderful Time Of Year?"

The Christmas season is a very difficult time of year for many people with narcissistic families & in-laws. They make it an over the top, incredibly stressful time with their unrealistic demands & expectations, so it's no wonder so many people dread this supposed "most wonderful time of year." I plan to offer some survival tips today to help you survive a dysfunctional family gathering if you can't get out of it.

First & foremost, pray. Ask God to give you strength, wisdom, courage & anything else you can think of that you may need. Ask Him to guide your words, too. I can't stress enough how important prayer is at any time but in particular regarding dealing with narcissists.

Remember you aren't dealing with normal, functional people. You're dealing with people who have unrealistic expectations that no one can possibly meet. When you let them down, & you will, remind yourself of this. The inevitable guilt trips & shaming will follow, but if you remember that their expectations are designed so others will fail as a way to hurt & control, it helps you reject the guilt & shaming.

Also remember why this get together is so important. It's not about enjoying time together with loved ones & celebrating a special day. It's about appearances, & portraying the family as a happy, functional family. When you see family members getting along well, remember that it's just an illusion to create narcissistic supply. Don't let it suck you in.

Another important thing to remember is narcissists use gifts as one more tool to manipulate & control others. They may give expensive, extravagant gifts as a way to make the receiver feel indebted to them or make the narcissist appear overly generous, even martyr-like to other people. They may "forget" to give someone a gift or give an obviously thoughtless gift as a way to make receivers feel that they aren't worthy of the narcissist's affections. Another popular narcissistic motivation is trying to change the receiver. Rather than give the receiver what they truly want or need, they give that person what they think they should have. They give clothes in their taste, not the receivers. They give supplies for a hobby or interest that the receiver has no interest in, but they do. This happened to me. I foolishly told my mother in-law I hated to cook a couple of months before Christmas one year. I knew she & her daughters loved to cook, but naively thought it wasn't important I didn't share this quality with them. For Christmas, my mother in-law & both sisters in-law gave me all kinds of cooking items like food, cookbooks, dishes & utensils. Clearly this was supposed to spark a newfound love of cooking in me. It failed, & I threw away or gave away everything.

When a narcissist gives you a gift, you can be sure that one of the motives I just mentioned is in play. If you can remember that, it helps make receiving their awful

gifts a bit easier. You won't feel guilty for giving away or throwing out what they gave you when you know the motives behind that gift were bad.

If you are in the bad position of being forced to deal with a narcissist around Christmas, prioritize yourself. Set boundaries & stick to them. Only spend a couple of hours with the narcissist instead of all day. Remember the Gray Rock Method. Keep all conversation superficial & divulge nothing personal. Change the subject back to the narcissist instead. They love to talk about themselves, so use this to your advantage! If you get a terrible gift, show no emotion. Simply say thank you, then once you have the opportunity, get rid of the terrible gift.

It won't be fun, but you can survive this awful situation with your sanity intact. You can do it!

Thank you for listening to my podcast!