

# How to Be Nice to Your Family

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A healthy family can pick you up when times are rough, support you towards your aspirations, and encourage you to be your best self. People with healthy and connected families are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer.<sup>[1]</sup> However, to get these benefits your family has to get along. If you're mean to your family and don't know how to stop, it's time that you take the correct measures to fix your behavior, and work on being nicer for everyone's well being.

Method  
1

## Method 1 of 3: Choosing Positive Behavior



**1 Do not yell, scream, or lash out violently.** If it's become normal in your family to lash out by raising your voice, it's time that you work on changing that behavior for your entire family. Verbal and physical abuse can come in many forms and includes yelling, screaming, berating, hitting, slapping, or trying to humiliate someone.<sup>[2]</sup> Instead of letting the argument escalate to that level, talk in a calm voice and get your opinions and views out without yelling or screaming.

- Instead of getting personal just say something like "I really didn't like that you went into my room and read my diary. Those are my personal thoughts and I want to keep them to myself."
- Older family members should set the example. The more that you yell and scream in your house, the more likely that children will emulate the behavior.<sup>[3]</sup>
- If you are a younger person in the family whose elders yell and scream, it doesn't mean that it's the right thing to do. Remain calm and talk to your family members.
- Saying things like "calm down" or "it's not a big deal" may make someone angrier. Try to see their point of view and the reasons they are mad instead of dismissing their feelings.



**2 Stop and think about why you are mad at them.** If you get angry often, it's important that you start to understand your anger and work towards reducing it when you're in conflict. Being angry consistently can take a physical and mental toll. Over an extended period it could lead to insomnia, high blood pressure, digestion problems, and depression.<sup>[4]</sup> Be honest with yourself and think about why you are angry, then come up with potential solutions and compromises instead of losing your cool.

- For example, if your parents asked you to raise your grades and you get angry, think about why you are angry. Are you angry that your parents are asking you to do something, or are you angry because you're having a difficult time in school and may need help? In the end they are looking out for your best interests.
- Let negative feelings of entitlement go. Don't think things like "It's not fair" or dwell on not getting your way. It will make you angrier over time.<sup>[5]</sup>
- Do not hold back your feelings or emotions to try to come off friendly or polite. If something bothers you, speak up, or else you may repress your anger, and it could come up at a later time.<sup>[6]</sup>



**3 Channel your energy into a physical hobby or sport.** Engaging in physical activity releases endorphins in your brain that make you happier.<sup>[7]</sup> If you find yourself getting mad frequently, it may be because of a lack of physical activity. Join a local sports team or club, or take up a hobby that involves exercise.

- If you are child or teen, then join a sports team at your school or an intramural sport at the local community center.
- If you are older, some hobbies to pick up include hiking, mountain climbing, biking, or going on a jog.
- Being heavily involved in a hobby or sport will also get you away from your family more often, which may allow you to appreciate them.



**4** **Treat your family members as you would want to be treated.** Sometimes known as the "Golden Rule," treating others as you would want to be treated is a common expression in many religions and cultures.<sup>[8]</sup> Think back to times where people have been mean, dismissive, or have tried to humiliate you in the past and work to re-live the emotions that you felt during that period. This should help you relate to your family members and how they feel when you are mean to them.

- Think about a time when someone at school made fun of you in front of a crowd. Chances are you felt humiliated, embarrassed, and depressed. Realize that this is how your family members feel when you yell or scream in public, at them.
- Treating others poorly encourages people to treat you in a similar way.





**5 Consider all of the loving things that they do for you.** If you have negative thoughts about people in your family, and you build resentment towards them, it's hard to break away from the mindset and consider all of the positive things that they do. Think of times in the past that they sacrificed to make you happier or times where you all enjoyed each other's company instead of concentrating on the negative moments.

- If you're a teenager, think about what your parents provide for you like food, clothing, shelter, love, and education opportunities. If you are a parent, think about the joy that you felt when you first had them and try to be more understanding.
- Another method you could use is to imagine how you would feel if you lost that family member that you have negative feelings for. This may make you appreciate them more.<sup>[9]</sup>

**Method 2 of 3:  
Doing Nice Things**

**1 Do things around the house without being asked.** If you are a child or teen, then that means doing the chores or helping your parents or older siblings with tasks like taking out the garbage or cleaning the dishes. As an adult, you can do your best to create a positive environment for your family. You could prepare a freshly cooked meal, buy flowers to lighten up the mood, or make improvements on the house to improve everyone's life.

- Clutter can create stress and tension. Make sure that you clear away clutter and do things around the house to improve your family's mood.[10]



**2 Purchase or make gifts.** Getting family members surprise gifts can lift their spirits and put them in a good mood. Buy something that they enjoy or something that they told you they wanted. A gift that has sentimental value will remind a person that you care and appreciate them.

- Gift ideas include chocolate, flowers, a new video game, an instrument, or a Blu-ray of their favorite show.
- If you don't have any money you can make a card, write them a note, paint them something, or pick a flower from a garden.



**3 Apologize when you're wrong.** When you realize you've done something wrong, it's important to apologize. Instead of letting time pass, approach the person you hurt and say you're sorry. Don't think about the act and whether you think it's justified or not. Instead, concentrate on how your actions made the other person feel. Take personal responsibility for your actions and don't place the blame on others.

- You can say something like, "I'm really sorry about forgetting to let out the dog yesterday. It was really my fault and I'll try not to do it again."





**4 Support them through the rough times.** Everyone goes through tough times and needs support. One of the best places to receive that support is through your family. Try to understand your family member's perspective and consider how they feel and why they feel that way. Give whatever support you can, but don't push the issue. Make them realize that you're there for them whenever they are ready to talk.

- If you are an adult, try to stay away from being dismissive or saying things like "get over it" to younger family members. Even though the issue may seem trivial to you, it could be causing them immense stress.
- If you are child or teen, try supporting older family members through rough times by helping out more around the house and doing nice things for them.
- Be on your best behavior when your parents are working a lot or someone in your family is sick.
- If a younger family member needs advice, make sure to be there for them.

### Method 3 of 3: Communicating With Your Family



**1 Be open, honest, and polite.** People in healthy, happy families have good communication. This begins with being open, honest, and polite to one another. Talk about everything from how your day went to your future aspirations so that you can better get to know each other. If you don't like something that they do, make sure to tell them. The more that you communicate, the less you'll have to guess what is on their mind because they will freely tell you.

- Start by saying "Hey how was your day?" when you see family members when you get home.
- You can communicate disapproval by saying something like, "Jimmy, I know that you like to play games, but you need to limit it to three hours a day. It's cutting into your homework time and it's not good for you."
- Don't be afraid to tell your parents the truth if you've done something wrong. If they find out, and you didn't tell them, the consequences may be worse.



**2 Listen to them without interrupting.** Hearing someone out and truly listening to someone's problems strengthens your relationship with someone. Unfortunately, many people have never learned how to listen truly to someone else. Active listening involves giving them time to talk, acknowledging their problems and emotions, and trying to offer meaningful feedback.<sup>[11]</sup>

- Silence is sometimes the best way to get someone to admit their mistakes. People will typically work problems out verbally when explaining something.
- Don't act judgemental when someone is admitting or confessing something to you. This will prevent them from being open and honest in the future.<sup>[12]</sup>



**3 Walk away when you are angry.** It is better to talk to them later, once you have regained your composure. One of the best ways to avoid an argument is to disengage in whatever conversation is making you angry. Disengage in a non-confrontational way and tell them that you will talk to them later. This will give you the time to cool down, and time to think about the situation.<sup>[13]</sup>

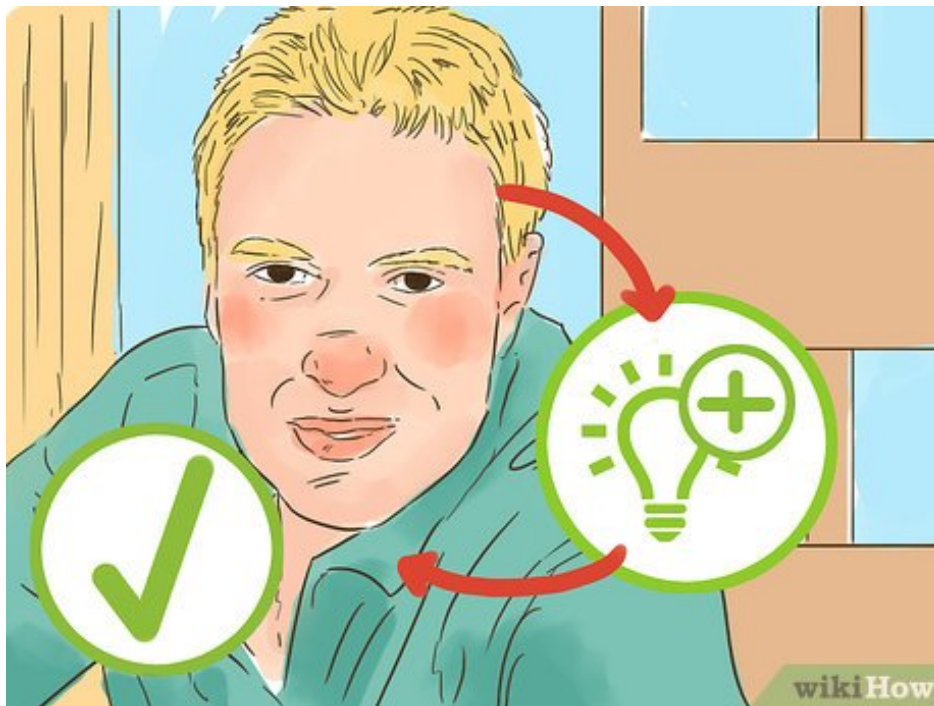
- Say something like "I need to cool down right now, but I do want to talk about this later. Do you mind if we talk about it in an hour?"
- Make sure to revisit the point of conflict once you calm down. Do not totally avoid it or resentment could grow.



**4 Be respectful.** <sup>[14]</sup> As a child or teen, there are rules and regulations you should follow. Elders have more life experience and will likely know more about a situation than you. Speaking in a snide, sarcastic, dismissive, or angry tone is disrespectful, and many parents will get mad. Children and teens should learn from older people's mistakes and try to absorb as much information as they can.

- Speaking in a negative way creates a negative environment which will hurt you in the long run.





**5 Try to understand their point of view.** <sup>[15]</sup> If you are teen or child, realize that much of what your older family members do is in your best interests even if it doesn't seem obvious at first. Their priority is to keep you safe, happy, and successful, and this may include forcing you to do things that you don't like to do. As an adult, remember to set guidelines for younger family members, but also try to relate with them. You don't have to be their best friends, but understand that they have a similar emotional range, even if different things trigger their emotions. Even if an issue may seem silly to you, fear, depression, anxiety, and anger are all emotions a younger family member could feel.<sup>[16]</sup>



## Expert Q&A

### Question

**How can I stop my family from arguing about certain topics?**



**Chloe Carmichael, PhD**  
Licensed Clinical  
Psychologist  
Expert Answer

I would respectfully ask that they not discuss those stressful topics when you're together. Another method is to have everyone agree to only ask questions in response during the discussion instead of making comments or passing judgment. This will lead to a more productive conversation.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 1

### Question

**Why do I feel lonely when I'm not alone?**



Community Answer

You may feel like no one understands you or that you're the only person who feels the way that you do. Realize that you're not. Meet people who share the same interests and care about what you have to say and what you like to do.

Helpful 29 Not Helpful 5

### Question

**My brother is mean to me sometimes. Does he love me?**



Community Answer

Yes, he loves you. He may be mean to you because he is not happy. Try to talk to him more often, and when he does things that bother you explain that it hurts your feelings. He may not listen at first, but over time he may change his ways.

Helpful 29 Not Helpful 5

### Question

**What if you hit someone?**



Community Answer

Never hit anyone in your family. Not only is this illegal, it also creates a terrible environment of violence. Apologize to the person you hit, and stay determined to never lose your cool that badly again.

Helpful 29 Not Helpful 9

## VideoRead Video Transcript

<https://www.wikihow.com/video/d/df/Be+Nice+to+Your+Family+Step+0.1080p.mp4>

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## About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Chloe Carmichael, PhD**. Chloe Carmichael, PhD is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist who runs a private practice in New York City. With over a decade of psychological consulting experience, Dr. Chloe specializes in relationship issues, stress management, self esteem, and career coaching. She has also instructed undergraduate courses at Long Island University and has served as adjunct faculty at the City University of New York. Dr. Chloe completed her PhD in Clinical Psychology at Long Island University in Brooklyn, New York and her clinical training at Lenox Hill Hospital and Kings County Hospital. She is accredited by the American Psychological Association and is the author of "Nervous Energy: Harness the Power of Your Anxiety" and "Dr. Chloe's 10 Commandments of Dating." This article has been viewed 60,028 times.

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16 votes - 82%

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