

# Positively Speaking

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## Making the Christmas Connection

The Christmas season is supposed to be a time of connecting. We send cards to our friends, attend family gatherings, and express our appreciation to those close to us.

Unfortunately, Christmas can also be a season of "mis-connection" or even "dis-connection". The stress of the holidays can take its toll on family relationships.

If your patience happens to be running a bit thin during this holiday season -- here are a few reminders which may help:

### 1. Look Beyond the Faults to the Treasure!

Each person is a unique creation -- a gift from God. The Bible says that we carry the treasure in "jars of clay." Often, the clay gets in the way, and we fail to see the treasure. Let's make every attempt to look beyond the clay to the deeper treasure. You will find it with a second look.

### 2. Practice Preferring One Another.

Our society tends towards self-centeredness. We want to have our own way. We want to make sure our own opinions are heeded. Yet, the art of preferring one another contradicts selfishness at the very root. If we put others first, we will find an unusual depth of joy.

### 3. There's more than One Side to Most Issues.

If you are in the middle of a disagreement, it is always good to step back and realize that the other person may have a valid point too. You will shortchange yourself if you believe that your ideas are the only ones with validity.

### 4. Respond Rather than React.

Many conflicts can be avoided by thinking first and then acting. "Think before you speak" is a good motto. Flying off the handle usually results in a bad landing!

### 5. Let it Go.

If you are carrying old grievances and resentments in your emotional backpack, the very best gift you can give yourself this Christmas is to lighten the load and let them go. Refusing to release bitterness makes one's heart bitter and hard. Bitterness is a deadly poison. Hard heartedness destroys the joy.

Stop for a moment and reflect. Is there an emotional distance between you and a friend or loved one right now? Is there anything you can do to build a bridge? There's no better season for reconciliation than Christmas.

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