

How to avoid the family Thanksgiving apocalypse

Written by 'Grammar Guy' By Curtis Honeycutt Guest Columnist
Friday, 17 November 2023 06:06



As the aroma of roasted turkey fills the air and the anticipation of Thanksgiving festivities builds, so does the looming dread of potential political and cultural hot topics at the family table. These conversations, often fueled by strong opinions and a generous helping of tryptophan, can quickly transform a joyous gathering into a heated debate.

To help you navigate this minefield of conflicting viewpoints and maintain harmony during this special occasion, here are some pre-approved, politically and grammatically correct Thanksgiving talking points to keep you from coming to blows with Uncle Rick.

“I’m thankful for my family, my friends and my stretchy pants.” In this list of gravy-induced gratitude, your loved ones will smile, smirk and perhaps even chortle at the thought of approaching the table with the intent to eat. Take this sentence as a jumping-off point to recalling the days of yore when grandpa would undo his belt so he could eat one more piece of grandma’s pecan pie.

“Pass the potatoes, pilgrim.” Using your best John Wayne impression, have Cousin Amanda hand you Aunt Helen’s heavenly mashed potatoes. Instead of discussing climate change, you can heap gravy onto your potatoes to form a delicious volcano.

“Who wants to see the Snoopy balloon?” Watching the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade will bring the family an inflated sense of nostalgia. Tune into this program and forget football rivalries. Flip over to the National Dog Show and pick the ugliest dog to root for as a family.

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"I'll fight you for the wishbone." The only family competition that needs to happen at the table is the battle for the wishbone. Battle your nephew for the largest side of the bone, and ignore the conversation about Cousin Nina's newfound embrace of free-range fruitarianism.

"That cranberry sauce is my jam." While everyone appreciates the effort of homemade cranberry sauce, we all know the good stuff comes out of the can. If my cranberry sauce isn't in the shape of a disc, I don't want it.

Although I'm mostly joking here, the real lesson is the importance of complimenting each family member who contributed to the meal. Whether it's your wife's green bean casserole or your brother's store-bought soda, compliments make everyone feel good.

This Thanksgiving, I'll argue that kind words are more important than perfect prose. Feel free to end your sentences with prepositions as long as you offer to add a healthy dollop of whipped cream on your sister's pumpkin pie. Regardless of any differing worldviews or levels of language lexicon, kindness and great food will bring you all closer together.

—Curtis Honeycutt is an award-winning syndicated humor columnist. Connect with him on Twitter (@curtishoneycutt) or at curtishoneycutt.com.

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