

## ***Wishing You Ease Through the Holiday Season and Beyond***

This is Loren Gelberg-Goff, psychotherapist, author, and creator of the life-changing program Take Back Your Life. My gift to you is one strategy that can prevent unnecessary arguments, which, unfortunately tend to occur even more as the holidays unfold.

Situations can easily get out of control when we feel defensive, irritated, exhausted and frustrated.

All too often you are bombarded with demands, requests, and needs from aging parents or family members, who you want to lovingly care for. And there are days when it is challenging to feel the love, when all you feel is the stress. And then explosions or implosions happen, and everyone begins to wonder if the holidays really are joyful and loving.

Here's just one option you can use to stop the flare-ups, whether they're out loud or implied:

### ***The Following Steps Help Prevent, Short Circuit, and Stop the Explosions***

1. ***And we breathe...*** whenever you hear your family's or mother's requests, demands or needs - regardless of what they are - practice taking a slow deep breath...no talking, just breathing....
2. ***Repeat back to them*** whatever the request, demand or need was. You are checking in to make sure you have heard correctly.
3. ***Validate their need, demand or request.*** This step is about recognizing that a request, demand or need comes with their belief that it is important to them, even if you don't think so. So, no judgments...just a validation that you know what they want is important to them. ***Take another deep breath....***
4. ***Pick a phrase that validates their feelings,*** along the lines of: *"I understand how frustrating this situation is for you," "I understand how upset you must be," "Wow, that is a lot for you to deal with," or "I hear how important this is for you."* ***This step is all about compassion.*** Even if you don't feel it, you say it. All most of us want is to be and feel validated. ***And we breathe again....***

5. **Say, “Thank you!” “Thank you for understanding** how frustrating it is for me that I can’t fix this...” **And we breathe....** Say, “Thank you... I appreciate how hard it is for you...” “Thank you for understanding my situation.” Now, maybe mom or dad or a family member won’t really understand, but the importance of this statement is that it *redirects the energy* of the moment... **You are now no longer arguing!**

You are no longer explaining, defending or justifying your position or situation. You are breathing - and connecting with your mother, father or family member, in a meaningful and compassionate way that will move your discussion in a new direction.

We can talk more about this strategy and many others in greater detail to help you learn to take as good care of yourself as you do of the others in your life - because it is my goal to empower you to **Take Back Your Life.**

If you want or need more guidance, please go to [takebackmylifefor.com](http://takebackmylifefor.com) and schedule a 1:1 call with me.

*I wish you peaceful and loving holidays!*

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...**and we breathe....**

