

How to Bring Your Coaching Skills to the Thanksgiving Table: Episode 268

Elena: If you have a complicated relationship with your Thanksgiving table, then this one's for you. Hello friends. Welcome to the Bright Morning Podcast. I'm your host Elena Aguilar, and in each podcast episode you will learn how you can lead conversations that build connection and spark change. So today's episode is a little different.

It's not about classroom observations or coaching stances or feedback. It is about Thanksgiving and more specifically, how you can bring your coaching skills to the table, literally and figuratively, to build connection, reduce tension, and show up with integrity during this holiday season. We all know the potential minefields of a holiday gathering, heated political conversations, discomfort with family dynamics, feeling invisible or misunderstood or overwhelmed this time of year can bring up joy and pain.

And for many of us who coach and lead during the week, it can feel like we are thrown into a space where we don't know how to show up. But what if you could bring your coaching presence and your coaching skills to these spaces? Often we go into family spaces with walls up or no boundaries at all. We react, we retreat, or we try to fix.

But those approaches rarely lead to the connection that we want. I remember Thanksgiving some years back where someone made a comment about those kinds of kids and my whole body tense, and I noticed the anger bubbling up in my belly and I wanted to call them out, but I paused and I took a breath and I asked.

Can you tell me more about what you mean by that? So that didn't resolve everything, but it opened up a conversation and it deescalated the moment. It created the possibility for truth and curiosity and connection. This is what we do as coaches. We listen, we ask questions. We hold space. So I've got three suggestions for how you can bring your coaching practice to Thanksgiving.

The first is to lead with curiosity. When someone says something you disagree with, try saying, I'm really curious, what's shaped your perspective on that?

The second thing you can do is set a boundary with love. And that could sound something like, I really want this meal to feel warm and connected. Can we stay away from that topic right now? And the third thing you can do is affirm and reflect. You can ground others by saying. It sounds like this year has been a lot for you.



Just using one of these moves can shift the tone for the whole evening. So I've got a challenge for you this week before your next gathering, whatever kind of gathering that is, take five minutes to reflect what do I want to feel at this meal or at this gathering? What do I wanna feel? Who do I want to be in this space and what support do I need to show up that way?

Anchor yourself and your values. Practice with your presence. You already have the tools, you have the skills. And just remember, you can use coaching in all of your relationships. You can step into your coaching stance, your coaching persona in all your relationships. This is a way to connect, so bring your heart, bring your listening, bring your questions, and thank you for doing the work to grow yourself and grow connection at work and at home, and in your communities, and in your families.

And thank you for being a part of my community. And if Thanksgiving is a holiday that you celebrate, then I wish you one that is rich in meaning and grounded in presence and full of compassion. Thank you for being with me today, and if you appreciated this episode and you are listening via podcast, then please share it with someone who you know would benefit from it and or you could hop over to Apple Podcasts and leave us a five star rating and a review to help others discover it.

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And don't forget that this episode is part of our weekly podcast and subscribe, and you will never miss a feature episode. All right, friends, LesLee Bickford is the podcast producer and Stacey Goodman does the sound engineering. Be well everyone, and I'll see you next Monday.

