



# Don't Let Impeachment Ruin Your Holidays

December 2019

Even before the events of the past few months, these were fraught times for family gatherings. If you are wondering how to navigate the holidays among your Trump-supporting relatives and in-laws, read on.

Our goals for you: To have an honest and respectful conversation. To discover (or re-discover) shared values. To create an opening for someone to begin to see things in a different way. To remember that at the end of the day, our families, like our country, are stronger when we stand together—and that we will need those bonds when this moment of crisis passes. Most of all, to have a happy holiday.

<b>DO:</b>	<b>DON'T:</b>
Seek better understanding. Ask questions. Genuine questions. Respectful questions. Not “How could you think that?” but “Why do you think that?” See below for some ideas.	Set a goal to change anyone’s mind. Minds don’t change quickly, and persistent debating can have the opposite effect. It’s ok to leave them with something to think about. If you can make someone begin to consider a new perspective, you’ve done a lot.
Listen for common ground and assume good intentions. Are there shared values you can build on?	Try to play “gotcha” or embarrass someone by calling out their inaccurate facts. Instead, ask why they believe something and whether they would think differently if the facts turned out to be otherwise. <a href="#">Just Security</a> provides a good, non-partisan source of impeachment documents, <a href="#">Lawfare</a> provides a helpful timeline, and Third Way has a list of <a href="#">responses</a> to Republican talking points on impeachment.

<p>Use “I” statements to explain your views and values rather than “you” statements that risk mischaracterizing or labeling the person you’re speaking with. “Republicans don’t care about the truth” is less effective than “I find it hard to square Republicans’ arguments with things the President has said and the witnesses’ testimony.”</p>	<p>Get distracted by process arguments. Republicans in the House were allowed to call witnesses and had equal time to question witnesses, President Trump was invited to participate, and the process <u>largely mirrored</u> the processes in 1973 and 1998. Procedural skirmishes will have different outcomes in the Democrat-controlled House and Republican-controlled Senate, but these don’t change the central question: Are the President’s actions ones that we should accept from any president?</p>
<p>Separate fact from assumptions and interpretations—and acknowledge those points of departure. Can you identify places where you agree on facts but interpret those facts differently?</p>	<p>Be afraid to give a little. Many Republican arguments—e.g., about Hunter Biden’s position on the Burisma board, about the process in the House, about the whistleblower—are irrelevant to the actual issue here: Was the President right or wrong when he tried to use military aid to extract a personal political favor?</p>
<p>Focus on the main question: Were President Trump’s actions appropriate?</p>	<p>Lose your cool, interrupt, or—please—call names. (We know, you know.) Around the table, a persuasive advocate is seldom an angry advocate is seldom a persuasive one.</p>

## Questions for those who don’t (yet) support the impeachment of President Trump

1. Do you think this kind of behavior is OK?
2. Are there things that you wish the President would do differently?
3. Do you agree with President Trump when he says he can do anything and get away with it as long as he’s president? Where would you draw the line?
4. Do you think the witnesses who testified—many of whom were military veterans, former Republican appointees, and hand-picked advisors to President Trump—had any reason to lie? Did you believe their testimony?
5. If the President really thought there was a credible case against the Bidens, why didn’t he ask Barr’s Justice Department or Pompeo’s State Department to look into it?
6. Have you read the call transcript summary? Read or watched the witness testimony before the Intelligence Committee?

7. If the President's closest advisors and witnesses could exonerate him, why isn't he encouraging them to come forward?
8. Why hasn't the President presented his case? He was invited to present it. Why didn't he send a lawyer, appear in person, or at least hold a town hall on the issue?
9. Do you think you would feel the same way if President Obama held up military aid to get another country to announce an investigation of President Trump?
10. What would the ideal leader of the Republican Party look like to you?
11. Do you think the Republican House leadership should have "whipped" their members to vote against impeachment, or do you think they should have let them vote their conscience?
12. What do you think is the most persuasive piece of evidence in President Trump's favor? Is there any evidence that makes you uncomfortable?
13. Do you think impeachment is ever appropriate? In what circumstances?
14. The evidence seems to tell a consistent, coherent story. Are there places where you find it inconsistent?
15. If you think that Democrats should have taken their concerns to court, does that mean you would be comfortable with the impeachment proceedings continuing through the next election?