

Protect Your Dream at Dysfunctional Family Get Togethers

Let's face it; all families are dysfunctional. Dissertation writers need to protect themselves during the holidays. After all, it's a perfect time for Aunt Agnes to ask, "Are you done with that paper you've been writing all these years, dear?" Prepare yourself, by reading this essay by Suzanne Falter-Barns.

OK, it's the holidays. And with the holidays come family. And with family comes either buckets of love and support for your dream ... or a certain coolness. Here's a seasonal reprint of my most popular article.

It's not that all family members mean to be intentionally rude; it just may be that they can't relate to what you're up to. Could be you're the 'creative one' in the family, and they just don't get why you had to quit your job in banking to be an entrepreneur with a fledgling start up. And yes, sadly enough, there may be certain family members who are simply jealous – especially if you're successful doing what you love and they're not.

You can protect this very important thing you are meant to do. Think of your dream business you're developing as a tiny, newborn child -- one who will thrive, but only if you give it proper nurturing and protection.

May I offer some tips for taking care of your dream baby over the holidays. Top of the season to you!

- Remember that you're not around to live up to anyone else's expectations ... save for you own. A little affirmation to that end can be really useful when up against it. Try repeating a key phrase to yourself if the going gets really rough, like "I'm more than enough, just the way I am."

- Hold your work as sacred. After all, it really is sacred, right? If you want to make sure, give it this test: At the end of your life, will you be proud of your dream accomplishments ... or filled with regret?

- Interpret criticism, jealousy, and sarcasm as a good sign. It means you're pushing buttons and sounding true. Not only that, it means you're making a difference. Small thinkers do find that especially annoying.

- Don't snipe back -- rise above it. Save your energy for the important stuff ... like your dream. And make a point of avoiding anyone who has a habit of attacking you or your work. Simply head off to get more eggnog.

- Try a little empathy. Those who take issue often lack a dream themselves. But don't waste too much time feeling sorry for them - you've got work to do!

- Assume a happy mask of detachment. Think like a seasoned customer service pro who is dealing with one of life's 'difficult customers'. Remember, their angst is their problem, not yours. (This goes for those who snipe and attack, as well as the obsessive worriers and the non-stop advice givers.)

- Stop hoping for acceptance. Chances are it simply won't come from some corners... and that's OK. (See point #1.) Ultimately, being loved by every soul on the planet is not what matters ... nor is it even possible.

- Don't be smug. You don't have to be -- you've got the joy of doing your dream!

- Go have a good primal scream when you're alone. If you're in an apartment building or have nearby neighbors, close doors and windows and scream into the pillows on your bed. Scribbling with a big black marker on a big blank pad is

marvelously satisfying as well.

- Remember to breathe. You really are doing just what you're meant to be doing.

- Find an ally. For every negative voice in your life, there should be at least one bona fide cheerleader, as well. Get these folks on your side, and make sure you can contact them whenever you need support – and, of course, offer to provide the same for them.

- Limit your contact with the nay-sayers. Who needs 'em? Just smile and move on ... hey, you've got your dream to keep you company!

Suzanne Falter-Barns' website at GetKnownNow.com offers tips and tools that help you build your platform and get known as an expert in your field. Sign up for her free ezine, Expert Status, and receive her free database, "Suzanne's Top 50 Media & Publishing Contacts". And get regular, easy platform tips at her blog, Get Known Now Blog