

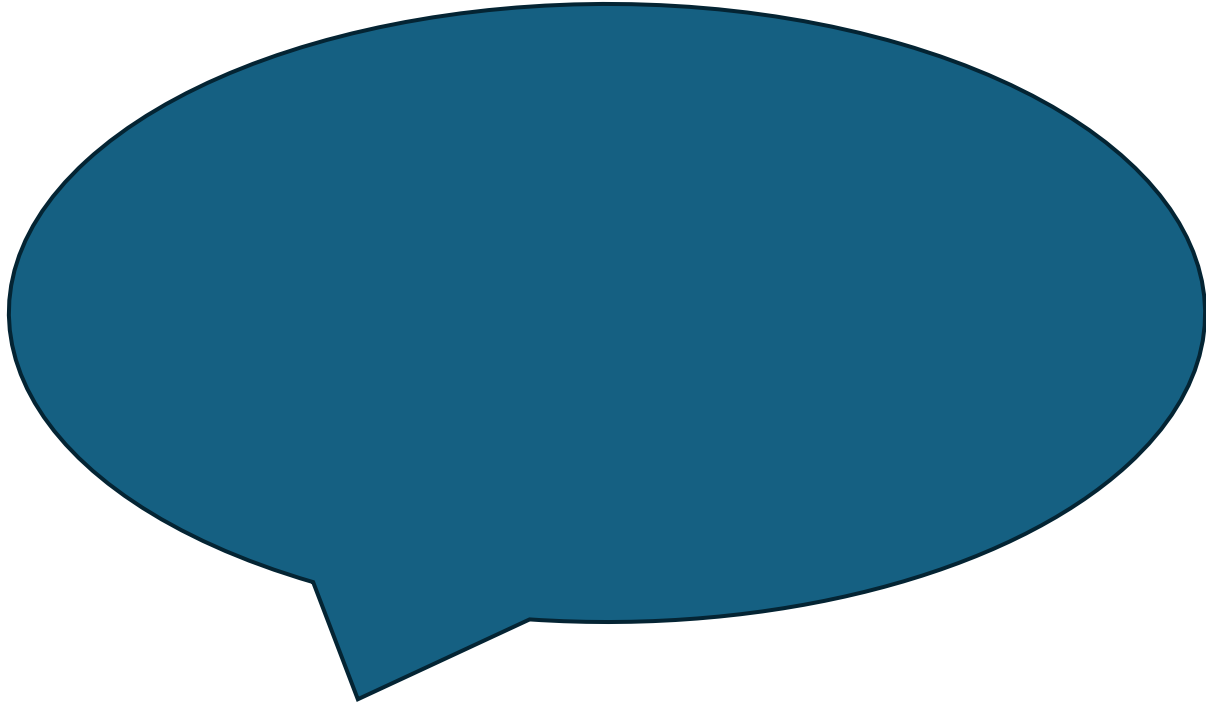
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# Pumpkin Pie Diplomacy

Top 5 Strategies to Avoid Family  
Conflict This Thanksgiving





## The Research Question

- **How do Americans prepare for potential political conflicts during Thanksgiving gatherings?**
- **What prior experiences and expectations do people have for potential political discussions with family members?**



## Methodology

Chat-based conversations with Engage AI interviewing 1065 people about their concerns and strategies for navigating polarizing political discussions at Thanksgiving gatherings.



## Sample Size: 1065

### Gender:

- 45% Female
- 54% Male
- 1% Non-binary

### Age:

- Age range: 18-92
- Average age: 48

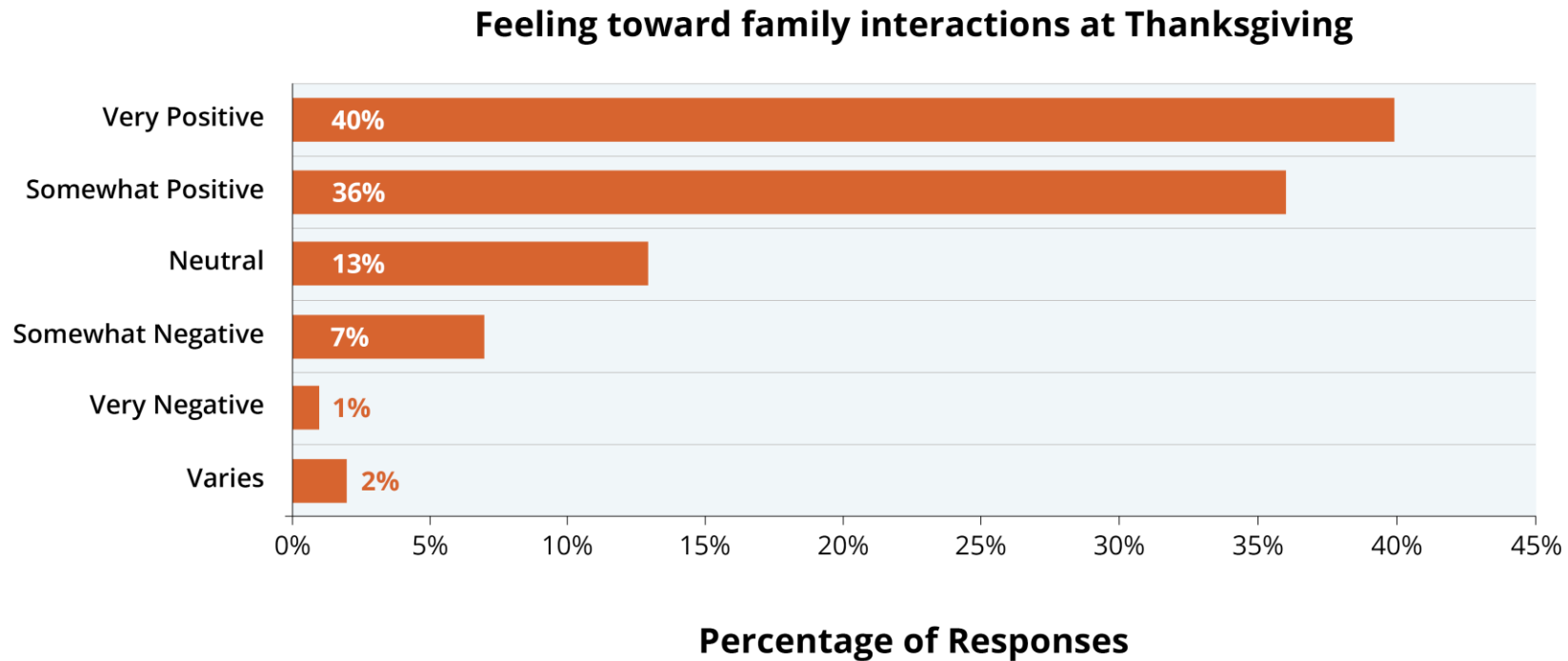
### Race/Ethnicity:

- 66% White
- 14% Black
- 7% Latino
- 8% Asian
- 5% Other/Mixed



# Feelings toward family interactions at Thanksgiving

## Question: How do you generally feel about family interactions during Thanksgiving?



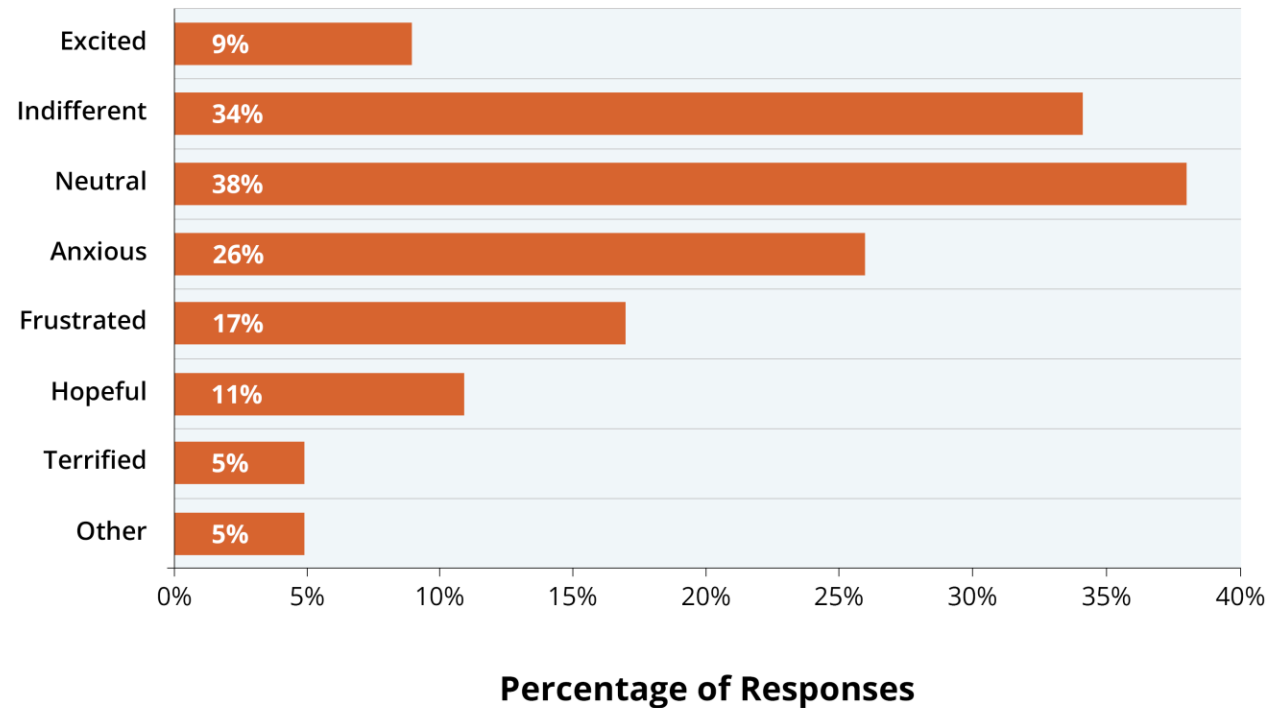
Total Responses: 1065



Feelings about  
political discussions  
at Thanksgiving

## Question: How do you generally feel about the possibility of political

### Feelings toward political discussions at Thanksgiving



Total Responses: 1065

Which topics are most common at Thanksgiving gatherings?

## Most common topics of conversation with your family at Thanksgiving by political party.

Topics	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Total
Family matters	<b>89%</b>	81%	81%	84%
Food/Cooking	75%	75%	76%	75%
Work/school	<b>76%</b>	61%	67%	68%
Entertainment	61%	50%	55%	56%
Health	57%	51%	56%	55%
Politics	<b>52%</b>	40%	41%	45%
Sports	<b>44%</b>	<b>55%</b>	49%	49%
Pop culture	44%	21%	<b>36%</b>	34%
Science	14%	9%	17%	14%
Other	6%	13%	10%	10%
N	355	331	327	1,038

Top strategies for  
effectively  
navigating political  
conflict with family  
members

## Top Strategies for Preparing or Dealing with Potential Political Conflicts at Thanksgiving

1. **Conversation control and calm: 60% reported using this strategy** which involves preparing mentally for potentially challenging conversations and have ready to go topics and strategies to implement if a conversation devolves into an argument.
2. **"Politics Pause" Protocol: 24% reported using this strategy** which involves establishing clear guidelines and set explicit expectations for avoiding political topics in discussions.
3. **Disagree, don't duel: 16% reported using this strategy** which encourages respect for differing opinions and promoting civil conversation.
4. **Strategic silliness shift: 9% reported using this strategy** which utilizes humor as a diversion tactic to soften heated discussions.
5. **Playful pastimes and participation: 8% reported engaging in shared traditions and activities, like watching the football game or organizing family-friendly games, as a collective tool designed to keep tensions low.**



## CONVERSATION CONTROL AND CALM

### Safe topics

I usually have 3 topics I can change the subject to like sports or pop culture



48-year-old male Democrat

### Mental preparation

*"I would just plan to not engage in any emotional or political discussions and steel myself ahead of time."*



40-year-old female Democrat

*Deflect any negativity directed toward me; avoid contact with those I know are 'button pushers.'  
Realize it's only a few hours we're together*



65-year-old female Independent



## “POLITICS PAUSE” PROTOCOL

### Avoidance rules

*“We never discuss politics. I have made it clear we will not talk politics and we all adhere to that.”*



73 year old male Republican

### Avoidance rules

*“I tell everyone before they come to bring a dish and leave politics at the door.”*



43 year old male Democrat



## DISAGREE, DON'T DUEL

### Understanding others' perspectives

*“Everyone listens to other's opinions and tries to understand their thoughts and ways of thinking ”*



**60-year-old female Independent**

### Agree to disagree

*“It's easy for me to let it go. I know my family isn't going to agree with me on everything but that doesn't change the fact that we still love each other.”*



**30-year-old female Independent**

*“There is no law that says a family has to agree with each other. We can change the subject or just agree to disagree. Its really that simple. It doesn't get heated. There is no point in that. We strive to enjoy each others company and don't discuss sensitive subject especially on the holidays.”*



**64-year-old female Republican**



## STRATEGIC SILLINESS SHIFT

### Humor

*"Last year, a debate about politics got heated, so I gently changed the topic to a funny family story"*



46-year-old male Democrat

### Humor

*"Humor is usually the most effective topic"*



48-year-old male Republican



## PLAYFUL PASTIMES AND PARTICIPAION

### Creating a playful mood

*“For us doing lighthearted activities like playing games and singing and watching movies beforehand really eases the mood.”*



30-year-old female Democrat

### Games as a diversion

*“If we ever have an issue, we let a game of darts settle the debate. If we ever have an issue, we let a game of darts settle the debate, ”*

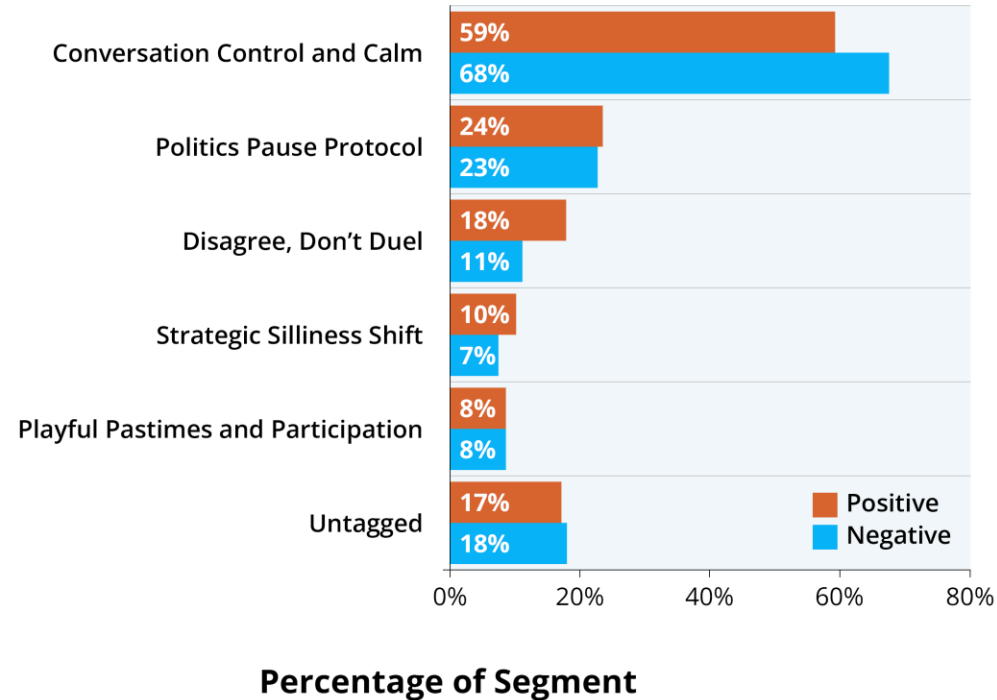


50-year-old male Independent

Which strategies  
are most effective?

# STRATEGIES EMPLOYED AMONG THOSE WITH POSITIVE VS NEGATIVE FAMILY INTERACTIONS

## Comparing Sentiment towards Family Interactions



Total Responses: 1065



## Summary

- Despite a prevalent narrative about the eroding of familial ties due to political rooted ideological differences, a large percentage of people in the US report positive family interaction at Thanksgiving
- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Americans report indifferent or neutral feelings about the possibility of political discussion at Thanksgiving
  - Yet a sizeable portion are anxious (26%) or frustrated (17%) about the possibility of political discussions, indicating a need for effective conflict management strategies
- Positive family relations are maintained through 5 prominent strategies to keep the peace
  - Those with the most positive family interactions are more likely than those with negative ones to implement the ‘Disagree, Don’t Duel’ strategy, suggesting a willingness to accept differences and consider another’s viewpoint is a critical tactic for politically diverse families

# Contact us for more information



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- [A.I. poll reveals why most voters think Harris won the debate \(CBS\)](#)

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- [Revolutionizing the Survey Experience with AI-Driven Conversations \(cloudresearch.com\)](#)

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