

Does GUILT drive your holiday decisions?

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The holidays can be loaded, don't you think? Originally posted on [Babycenter.com](#) and [Momformation blog](#) on December 16. Here's my take on holiday guilt:

The holiday season is supposed to be about appreciating family, and yet this season often leads to family feuds, guilt, and lasting resentment.

It all begins with the annual question, "Where should we go for the holidays? Should we go to my parents' house, my in-laws', sister's, my brother-in-law, or stay at our house? Can my children handle a long car trip or a plane ride? Can we afford it? Do we want guests at your house?"

All of those questions are important, but none touch on what seems to me to be the hidden underlying factor: What choice will least offend people?

As "good moms," we run around trying to make sure no one feels ignored or hurt because we're not at a particular holiday event this year. We accommodate ("we'll come over the day after..." even though you know you'll be exhausted beyond belief), we blame ("It's my husband's decision. He's the one who has to do the driving."), we use our kids as excuses ("It's just too much for us to drive the kids that far at night") and we might even lie ("I already told my friend who's alone this year that she could come to our house for Christmas, so we just can't come to your house").

Shouldn't being a good mom be about more than trying not to offend others? Shouldn't it include where we actually want to be for each holiday? Shouldn't it matter where our children and husband want to be? As I see it, the order of priorities dictates family first (immediately family, that is).



This doesn't mean going around deliberately hurting extended family and friends, but it does mean not being afraid to tell the truth. For instance, if your grandmother (your child's great-grandmother) attends a particular holiday dinner and being with her and seeing your child in her arms makes you melt, then that should factor into your decision. Or, if your parents have a fantastic holiday tradition that you love, then celebrate that particular holiday with your family and pick a different one to celebrate with your husband's parents. Or, if your husband has a big extended family with children around the same age as your kids and they all get together for the holidays, then that would be a good reason to spend time with them.

There are many good reasons out there: guilt is not one of them.

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Where are you going for the holidays this year? How did your family make that decision? Any tips for the rest of us?