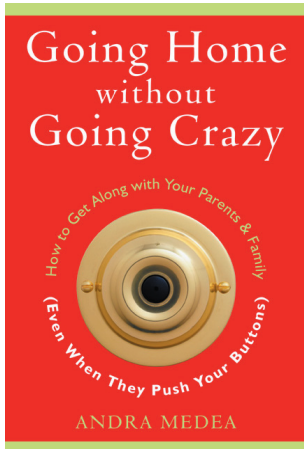


**“Every one has a family of origin and almost no one knows how to cope with them. You love them; they drive you crazy. You wish holidays and phone calls didn’t always end up like your own private reality show where you never get to change the channel.”**

— Andra Medea, author of *Going Home Without Going Crazy*



Dorothy said it best: there’s no place like home...

Sometimes it’s easy to get caught up in the excitement of going home—seeing your old neighborhood and friends; enjoying your mother’s cooking and your childhood bed... You enter the front door with a smile on your face, and you’re unprepared for immediate criticism you get from your parents, or the mockery of your siblings, and as you experience the same reaction that you always do (do you withdraw? get angry?) you remember why this pilgrimage has become an annual event and no more. Your family drives you

crazy. Because they *can*.

But author and conflict management expert Andra Medea believes that you can go home without going crazy if you know how to resolve old conflicts.

### **Please Stow Your Baggage**

Too often we leave our adult lives out on the sidewalk and find ourselves in painful old roles, with all the emotional baggage that goes with them. Instead this book will show you ways to get past the breakdowns, so you can enjoy family moments of togetherness and connection, rather than spending the holidays and homecomings seething with resentment and bitterness about past grievances.

### **So You’re Not The Waltons—Now What?**

Medea introduces a four-level conflict continuum that readers can use to understand and resolve family conflicts. From petty bickering to hurtful remarks to naked aggression, each level of conflict requires a unique approach. Readers will learn to communicate more effectively, deal with anger and resentment, and strengthen family relationships. Medea’s expert advice can be the difference between reconnecting with your family and booking the next flight out of town.

**NEXT: About the Author**

**FOR AN INTERVIEW REQUEST OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Earlita Chenault, 510-652-0215, ext.142, earlita@newharbinger.com**

**Going Home Without Going Crazy, by Andra Medea  
ISBN: 1-57224-449-6, ISBN-13: \$14.95, 6 x 9, 200 pages  
Published in September 2006, by New Harbinger Publications, 800-748-6273, www.newharbinger.com**

## About Andra Medea

Andra Medea is the author of *Conflict Unraveled: Fixing Problems at Work and in Families*. She developed her system teaching conflict management at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago, and created the Conflict Unraveled Toolkit™. She's a native Chicagoan and a cross-country cyclist. She holds that humor is a great way to survive one's family—and that sometimes it is the *only* way.

Learn more about Andra Medea at [www.conflictunraveled.com](http://www.conflictunraveled.com).

## Suggested Interview Questions for Andra Medea

1. Early in the book you discuss *flooding*. Could you explain what that is and how it affects you physically and mentally?
  - 1a. What is *silent flooding*? How can you prevent flooding?
2. You say that *guilt lock* explains one of life's great mysteries—how you can feel so bad about a given event and still do nothing about it. What's behind guilt lock and how do you break out of it?
3. What are some communication patterns that can lead to familial discord, and why?
4. Are there any steps one could take to prevent a full-scale blowout once they begin to get worked up over an unpleasant family conversation?
5. How did you come up with the idea of the "Conflict Continuum" and how does it help in dealing with familial altercations?
6. What are the different levels of conflict and what characteristics are particular to each to each level?
7. In your book, you discuss healthy behavior—how do you define healthy behavior?
8. You suggest the metaphor of a "blind spot" when addressing irrational interactions; could you please explain what this is? How can one better heed his or her blind spot?
9. What does it mean when a family member is predatory? How does one recognize a predatory family member, and how do you suggest dealing with them?
10. The holidays in particular seem to be when many family conflicts arise, ironically at a time when families hope to experience togetherness. What are some precautions one should take to avoid disputes during these events?

**NEXT: Surviving the first few hours**

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# Getting Through Your First Few Hours At A Family Gathering

Tips From Andra Medea, author of *Going Home Without Going Crazy*

Flooding occurs when an adrenaline overload overwhelms parts of the brain. Have you ever been so upset you can't think, can't speak, can barely cope? That's flooding.

Following are several common situations likely to inspire flooding. The accompanying suggestions provide a variety of ways you might use to handle flooding by yourself. You're driving to your parents' house and you're so upset you can hardly breathe.

## Step 1: The Road Home

- \* Turn on the radio and start singing at the top of your lungs. Don't bother meekly humming along with the music. Really belt it.
- \* Squeeze the steering wheel with both hands as hard as you can.
- \* Roll down the window and inhale some fresh air.
- \* If someone cuts you off in traffic, don't even think about bothering him. You may have things to be angry about, but don't take it out on a stranger.
- \* Watch your speed. When distracted by flooding it's easy to drive too fast for the conditions on the road.
- \* If you really can't focus, pull off to the side of the road and pound the dashboard for a while. You can get back on the road once your head is clear.
- \* Pull over at a rest stop, get out of the car, and walk around. Do not get more coffee or caffeine. You don't need to be any more on edge.
- \* If you get lost, pull over to the side of the road and breathe. Do not get into an argument with your passengers about whose fault it is. You'll probably need to calm down before you can make sense of the road map.
- \* If the kids start fighting in the backseat, they've probably absorbed your tension. Don't yell at them, sing at them. Get them singing, too. It will help you all to calm down.
- \* Don't talk on your cell phone. You're already not thinking well. Any more distraction and you could have an accident.

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# Getting Through Your First Few Hours At A Family Gathering

## Step 2: Getting There

You walk through the door at the annual family gathering. Instead of "Hey, great to see you!" you hear, "Idiot! Don't track that mess in here!" Say, "I left some thing back in the car," and walk right back out the door.

- \* Walk up and down the steps a few times until you calm down.
- \* Lift your bags out of the car. Lift the car. If they're watching from the window that'll really distract them.
- \* Do resist the urge to carry all your packages up the stairs in a single trip. First, you could hurt yourself. Second, you're not as coordinated as you might be, and you could drop things and trip over your feet. Finally, you'll calm down faster by making multiple trips up and down the stairs.
- \* Don't go back to deal with them until your head's clear.

## Step 3: Family Dinner

At dinner, some one makes a belittling remark. You start flooding.

- \* Stop eating. You won't be able to taste the food any way, so put your fork down.
- \* Take a deep breath. You can get a grip on your self without anyone noticing.
- \* Do isometrics: Press your arms against the arms of your chair. Slip your hands under the dinner table and lift straight up.
- \* If you can lift the dinner table, put it back down. You've just introduced a new line of discussion.
- \* Wait until your head clears before you say anything. No one will be listening any way, so you have all the time in the world.
- \* If some one is baiting you, say, "Actually, I was wondering about . . ." and introduce the distraction of your choice. Decide the topic in advance. Arthritis or babies can derail any discussion. By the time the conversation comes back to you, you'll have had plenty of time to collect yourself.

Flooding can be controlled. It may have controlled you in the past, but you can win now because of a very simple fact: you're smarter than a chemical. Adrenaline can't help what it does. You can. When adrenaline is in control, bad things happen. When you're in control, your life can be manageable again.

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