

Talking with Family

Category: Unvaccinated

written by Anonymous | September 5, 2021

I have a health condition that puts me at risk for complications from COVID, so when the vaccine came out I was eager to be vaccinated as soon as possible. My immediate family was supportive and on the same page. However, one family member, my aunt, remains unvaccinated.

Just before the pandemic, my family gathered for an in-person vacation. It happened to be around the time of the Democratic debates leading up to the 2020 election. There were six of us watching the debate, and only my aunt was a Trump supporter. My aunt was quiet through most of the debate and offered only a couple of negative comments directed at the TV. Afterward, I made the mistake of bringing up a hot button issue, which devolved into a nasty exchange on all sides.

I didn't often speak with my aunt before the vacation, but this exchange left me sad and distant from her, and though we have texted a few times since then, I have avoided calling her. When the pandemic started, my aunt's live-in boyfriend moved out, and I believe her loneliness drove her online, where she embraced various conspiracy theories. Now, each time a family member tries to convince her to reconsider, she tenaciously sticks with the stories she has been told and remains terrified of the vaccine.

My impulse is to continue to avoid talking with her, but recently I sent her a gift and she called to thank me for it. We had a civil conversation, during which the vaccine did come up. After I shared my point of view, she started to refer to some conspiracy theory she believes. I politely told her that I did not want to hear about it. Mostly we spoke about the gift and memories of her mother, my grandmother. At the end of the conversation, she invited me to visit if I am ever in her area. I can't imagine when I would feel inclined to do so.

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