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TRAINING IN MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In form

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Talkin' Turkey: Be a winner at dinner this Christmas!

December and January are stressful months. Pressure at work builds as end-of-year deadlines loom and next year's projects and targets are planned. But you can always leave that stress behind and take refuge at home, right? Wrong! Family get-togethers on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and Reyes will soon have you reaching for the Valium. But you can always leave that stress behind and take refuge at the office, right? Well, maybe not.

For many of us the most difficult part of Christmas is knowing what to say and how to behave during the many hours we will be trapped around a table next to a distant aunt or uncle we haven't seen for - well let's see - what must be 12 months now. Although we don't have a Christmas communication course in our portfolio, we'd like to show you what our competitors are offering. The motto: How not to be a Christmas turkey!

A company in Western Australia charges \$295 to turn you into 'a winner at dinner'. Among other things, you are taught:

- The ten successful topics you can talk about at any Christmas function. (But frustratingly, no mention of what these ten topics are. It'll cost you \$295 to find out).
- How to find original and interesting things to say to people you know well (a bargain at any price, particularly for husbands and wives).
- What to do with people who have had too much to drink (particularly useful in the English-speaking world, but nothing on what to do when it's you that's had too much to drink).

But why spend \$295 when you can get even better advice for free from *Women Today* magazine. A simple click on the Internet will reveal all. For example, Rule 4 tells us that 'Small is better'. And that you will be amazed at 'how quickly you can chew and swallow a small portion (of food)'. But wait, there's more. 'You never, ever, blow your nose at the table. You may just end up blowing an important networking opportunity.' So now you know.

And if you're looking for something different, you could do worse than buy Table Topics - the Conversation Topics game (available from Amazon for just \$20). The sales blurb encourages us 'to spice up our conversations' these excellent conversation starters make the most out of the moment with thought provoking topics and questions that are perfect for 'family dinners'. Or for just \$10.95 you can pick up the 'If you were a cereal ?' conversation cards, complete with questions like 'Would you rather be poor, fat, ugly or mean?' and 'Do you eat food after it's fallen on the floor?' We're told that 'these cards are great for breaking the ice at dinner or for picking up the cutie sitting next to you in a bar.' Given 4 stars out 5 by Amazon customers, by the way. If only we got feedback like that!

If you're not convinced by what our competitors are offering, perhaps you should give our Successful Stress Management course a try www.readmatthews.com/courses/stress.html. It won't teach you what to talk about

at the Christmas dinner table, but we guarantee it will chill out even the most overcooked Christmas turkeys.

Whatever you do this Holiday Season: Be a winner at dinner!

Merry Christmas! See you in the New Year!

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