NUMBER ONE:
Find common ground. Even if that means hating the same thing. A common enemy is a great unifier. How about holiday music? We can all agree they start playing it way too early. Start there.

NUMBER TWO:
See the good. Maybe someone just said something completely infuriating and you can feel yourself permanently categorizing them as a dunce and making a mental note to skip next year if they’ll be joining. Before this happens, try to picture them as a child blowing out the candles on their first birthday cake. They weren’t so bad then. Maybe there’s still hope.

NUMBER THREE:
Is there a dog? Pet the dog. It’s a known fact that petting a dog can lower your blood pressure and relax you. Maybe everyone should take turns. The dog won’t mind.

NUMBER FOUR:
If you need a break, sneak off to the bathroom for some deep breathing exercises. In through the nose. Out through the mouth. Oooooom. There, isn’t that better? And if you drink, there is always wine.

NUMBER FIVE:
Try to avoid making blanket statements or painting with too wide a brush. Everyone from the South is like this. Everyone who drives a Prius is like that. Every sentence that starts this way is a surefire way to piss someone off and make yourself look like less than the infinitely nuanced, fair-minded Maverick that you are.

NUMBER SIX:
Try to remember that you’re all there celebrating the holiday and that all anyone really wants is to eat their fill, enjoy each other’s company, and then ease into a tryptophan-induced couch nap while the Cowboys play quietly in the background.

NUMBER SEVEN:
Get comfortable with long odds. Hearts and minds aren’t likely to be won over before the turkey cools, but seeds planted can bear fruit in time. You never know who might come around by next year.

NUMBER EIGHT:
Mavericks don’t care if their opinions are unpopular, but don’t be controversial for its own sake. Empty posturing leaves a bad taste in everyone’s mouth. Even more so than aunt Janet’s Tuna Surprise.

NUMBER NINE:
If you find yourself backed into a conversational corner, there’s no shame in offering a ceasefire in the name of greater unity and family togetherness. Dinner napkins make for great white flags in a pinch.

NUMBER TEN:
Two words: air time. No one likes a boor who dominates the conversation. We know you’re passionate, and we love that about you, but make sure to listen as much as you talk. And practice empathy. You’ll live longer.