

Using “I” Messages

Using “I” messages helps build positive relationships. It helps you say what you feel without negatively criticizing the other person. It is a very simple strategy to remember!

For example:

Instead of saying, “You always play your radio too loud,” you would say, “When you play the radio loudly, I can’t concentrate. I would appreciate it if you would lower the volume.”

The first part describes the behavior or the situation.

The second part expresses how you feel.

The third part asks specifically:

- what you want to have happen
- the action you want the other person to take
- what you need from the situation

Here is another example of an “I” statement:

Instead of saying, “You never tell me where you are going,” you would say, “When you leave without telling me where you are going, (*the behavior*) I get worried (*how I feel*). I need to know when you are leaving the house.” (*what I need to have you do*)

Use the **formula** to rewrite the sentences:

1. When you _____
2. I feel (or I think that) _____
3. I need _____ .

Depending upon the situation, you can also add some things. For instance:

1. When you _____
2. I feel (it makes me think that) _____
3. I need _____
4. because I want to _____.

Or:

1. When you _____
2. I feel (it makes me think that) _____
3. I need _____ .
4. What do you think?

“I” Statement Practice Exercises

Rewrite each of the following using “I” statements. Remember to:

- 1. Describe the situation or behavior.**
- 2. Express how it makes you feel, or what it causes you to think or believe.**
- 3. Specify what you need, or what you want the other person to do.**

1. You never fill the coffee pot again after you have the last cup of coffee.
2. Don't ever touch anything in my desk drawer again!
3. You never empty the paper shredder.
4. You always interrupt me.
5. You are always late to my meetings.
6. You never invite me to go to lunch with you. (This is tough...)
7. You always leave colored paper in the copier when you finish using it.
8. Why do you always leave me the car when it needs gas?
9. You spend too much money on foolish things.
10. You never add paper to the printer when it is empty.
11. You never listen to me!
12. You need to get me a new computer.
13. You never help with the yard work.
14. You never put the calculator back where it belongs.
15. You always leave the newspaper all messy.
16. You never take out the garbage.
17. You never help with the kids.
18. You never have dinner ready on time.