



Youth Restoration Project

Cultivating Relationships; Restoring Community

"I" Statements

"I" statements let you state your case without arousing the other person's defenses. The secret of success lies in saying how it is for you, rather than what they should or shouldn't do. "You" statements are intrinsically blaming. Blame either shuts down further discussion, or incites and fuels destructive fighting.

"I" statements are not just a grammatical switch-up, but a philosophical commitment to speaking from the "I," from yourself, and only yourself. Speaking from the "I" will avoid implying that you know you're Right and speaking for objective reality. Righteousness also ends conversations or sparks head-butting.

"I" STATEMENTS:

When to Use

- When we need to confront others about their behavior
- When we feel others are not treating us right
- When we feel defensive or angry
- When others are angry with us

STEP 1. LISTEN

How to listen

- First - Do not interrupt
- Repeat back to the person what they have just said
(*try to put it in your own words*)
- Use 'ahaa' etc. to reinforce that you are listening
- Make sure your body language shows that you are listening
- Do not give advice (*unless asked for*)

Example leader sentences:

- What I'm hearing is....
- Did you say....
- So you reckon....
- I understand that....
- So you say that....



STEP 2. USE "I" AND NOT "YOU"

Example leader sentences:

- When I'm....
- When I....
- I think that I....
- I feel that I....
- My concern is....

STEP 3. REFER TO THE BEHAVIOR, NOT TO THE PERSON

Example leader sentences:

- When I'm shouted at I....
- When I'm sworn at I....
- When I'm pushed around I....
- When the towels are left on the floor I....
- When I think I'm not being heard I....
- When the books/papers/toys are left on the floor I....

STEP 4. STATE HOW THE BEHAVIOR AFFECTS YOU

Ask yourself ... how does this behavior affect me or make me feel?

Example leader sentences:

- I feel unappreciated when....
- I'm worried that something will go wrong if....
- My concern is that....
- I get really anxious when....
- I get really scared when....
- I feel hurt when....
- I feel tired when....

STEP 5 STATE WHAT YOU NEED TO HAPPEN

Example leader sentences:

- I need to....
- I would like....
- What I'd like to see happen is....
- It would be nice if....