“I” Statements

“I” statements are an effective way of communication that allows us to express our own feelings and needs without placing blame on the other person.

By using “I” statements, we take responsibility for our own feelings, while tactfully describing the problem. This helps the other person understand our perspective and reduces the likelihood of them having a defensive reaction.

To use “I” statements effectively, it’s important to focus on identifying your own feelings, as well as the facts of the situation. Avoid using any hidden “you” messages, which can still place blame on the other person.

I feel *(emotion word)* **when** *(explanation)*

Examples

“You” statement	“I” statement
You never listen to me.	I feel frustrated and hopeless when you’re on your phone during our conversation.
You spend money carelessly and don’t watch the budget.	I feel nervous and stressed when you spend money on extra items.
You always leave your mess lying everywhere.	I feel frustrated when I come home and the house is messy.
You didn’t text me like you said you would.	I feel worried when I don’t hear from you, and I just want to know that you’re ok and safe.
You’re always too busy to spend time with me.	I feel disheartened and unfulfilled when we don’t get to spend a lot of time together as a family.