

Activity

Replacing You-Messages with I-Messages

You-Statements are rude, disrespectful and lead to arguments and conflict. Even if someone is rude, such as in the example below, it is not appropriate to retaliate with aggressive words. Just because someone "starts it" doesn't mean you can't "end it."

Situation: A family member calls me a "loser."

Example of a You-Statement:

"You have no right to say that to me - you're the loser! How do you have such nerve?"

Notice the labeling and attempt to put down, control and retaliate. Also notice the rhetorical question which is a put down disguised as a question.

Example of an I-Statement:

I felt upset and angry (describe feeling) when you called me a "loser" (describe event) and would like for you to be more respectful and would appreciate an apology. (ask for a change)

Notice this is not at all like a You-statement. This time the person remains calm, confident and self-respecting and does not retaliate. There is no further name calling and put downs - the conflict stops with assertive behavior.

YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE:

Describe a challenging interpersonal situation in which you would like to be more assertive.

Write an I-Statement to handle it effectively

I feel (or felt) _____ when _____
(describe feeling) (describe event specifically)

and I would like _____
(ask for a change)

REMEMBER:

The goal of using I-Statements is to change yourself, not others.

Learning to use I-Statements takes practice!

Using I-Statements seems logical and simple, but many people find them so hard to do! Keep practicing!