



Assert Yourself With "I" Statements

One way of being assertive is to communicate your feelings and needs directly and honestly, without attacking the other person. The "I" statement is a way of doing this. There are four steps to making an assertive "I" statement.

Step 1: I feel ...

Make an honest statement about how you are feeling.

For example, "I feel very angry..."

- Hint - make sure you are really stating a feeling, not a thought or a belief about the other person. "I feel you are totally inconsiderate..." is a "You" statement disguised as an "I" statement.

Step 2: Because ...

Tell the person what action or behavior of theirs has triggered your feelings.

For example, "...because you are 45 minutes late and I've been worried about you."

- Hint - Be specific about why you feel that way, and talk about the present, like in the example above, rather than the past, as in "you're always late."

Step 3: I want or need ...

Tell the person specifically what you want or need from him or her now or in the future when similar situations arise.

For example, "I need you to be on time next time, and if for some reason you're going to be late I want you to call me."

- Hint - Make your needs or wants reasonable, and make sure you phrase them as your needs, not as demands, as in "you better..." or "next time you will..."

Step 4: I will ...

This step is optional. Hopefully the other person will give you what you need after step 3. However, if the problem persists, tell the other person what you are prepared to do to respond.

For example, "I won't go out with you the next time you're late."

- Hint - Don't make threats. Think carefully about what you say in this step because if you threaten something that you don't follow through with, you are giving the person the message that you don't mean what you say and your mind can easily be changed.

NOW YOU TRY!

Turn the following "You" Statements into "I" Statements using the four steps.

1. "You are such a lazy slob! I get stuck doing all the work around here! Clean up your mess now and don't ever let me see your dishes in the sink again OR ELSE!"

I feel _____ because _____

I want _____ (I will _____)

2. You are totally untrustworthy for telling my secret!

I feel _____ because _____

I want _____ (I will _____)

3. You're so loud all the time - why don't you just shut up!

I feel _____ because _____

I want _____ (I will _____)