

# "I" Statements

When a person feels that they are being blamed—whether rightly or wrongly—it's common that they respond with defensiveness. **"I" statements** are a simple way of speaking that will help you avoid this trap by reducing feelings of blame. A good "I" statement takes responsibility for one's own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem.

"I feel *emotion word* when *explanation*."

- ✓ "I feel..." must be followed with an emotion word, such as "angry", "hurt", or "worried".
- ✓ Careful wording won't help if your voice still sounds blaming. Use a soft and even tone.
- ✓ In your explanation, gently describe how the other person's actions affect you.

## Examples

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| <b>Blaming</b>       | "You can't keep coming home so late! It's so inconsiderate."  |
| <b>"I" Statement</b> | "I feel worried when you come home late. I can't even sleep." |

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| <b>Blaming</b>       | "You never call me. I guess we just won't talk anymore."                      |
| <b>"I" Statement</b> | "I feel hurt when you go so long without calling. I'm afraid you don't care." |

## Practice

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| <b>Scenario</b>      | A friend always cancels plans at the last minute. Recently, you were waiting for them at a restaurant, when they called to say they couldn't make it. |
| <b>"I" Statement</b> |   |

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| <b>Scenario</b>      | You are working on a group project, and one member is not completing their portion. You have repeatedly had to finish their work. |
| <b>"I" Statement</b> |   |

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| <b>Scenario</b>      | Your boss keeps dumping new work on you, with little instruction, and not enough time. Despite working overtime, you're weeks behind. |
| <b>"I" Statement</b> |   |