



THE MINISTRY OF PARENTING

What is an I statement?

An 'I' statement is four short sentences that helps the speaker ask for what they need or want.

What do they do?

- encourage the speaker take responsibility for their feelings.
- help the speaker avoid blaming others.
- are a useful way to open a conversation.
- can be planned before they are delivered.
- are a less threatening way to talk to someone about an issue that is bothering them without the use of inflammatory language.
- can/will open up possibilities you may not yet see.
- help the speaker to think about how they would like the situation to be different and
- inform the listener how they can change the situation.

Even if the situation may not look any different after an I statement is delivered, it often ***feels*** different, and that on its own can change things.

So, when can 'I' statements be used?

- ✓ When we need to speak to someone about something
- ✓ When we feel others are not treating us as we feel we deserve to be treated
- ✓ When we feel defensive or angry
- ✓ When others are angry with us
- ✓ To deliver a praise statement

They always start with *your feeling.*

- I FEEL** (own your feeling)
- WHEN** (say what happened, what caused the feeling)
- BECAUSE** (tell the listener why you are upset or pleased)
- I WOULD LIKE** (this is the most important sentence; tell your listener what you would like to happen or change).

What might a successfully delivered 'I' statement sound like?

Examples:

I feel anxious
 When I'm in a new situation
 Because I don't know what to expect
 I would like to find out some more about what it is I have to do

When do 'I' statements 'go wrong?'

If an 'I' statement contains a disguised 'you' message it can cause problems and make conflict more difficult to resolve.

'You' messages can lead to the listener becoming defensive or angry and communication can quickly break down.

'You' messages tend to be critical and apportion blame back onto the listener.... so rather than focus on accusing the listener, focus on *how you are feeling*, and your discussion will be far more successful.

'I' statement		'You' message	
I feel	upset	You make me	upset
When	I am shouted at	When	YOU shout at me
Because	it makes me anxious	Because	YOU know it makes me anxious.
I would like	to have ten minutes to calm myself then we can talk	I would like	to have ten minutes to calm myself then we can talk

Another way of disguising a 'You' message is when the speaker starts off using the 'I' statement, then uses the word YOU after when e.g.: I feel upset when you shout at me etc, once again this will lead to a breakdown in communication.

Just to make things a bit tougher – YOU can be used when a praise statement is given.

I feel... really excited

When... you said we will go shopping.

Because... it is ages since we spent time together.

I would like... to say thank you for making time for this.