



Owning Anger Using “I” Statements

“I” Statement – A way of communicating assertively by taking ownership of your feelings first and then respectfully telling others how their behavior affects you. Note the following aspects of “I” Statements:

- “I” Statements always starts with “I”, for example:
 - **“I feel frustrated when you arrive late”**
- “I Statements are nonthreatening to the listener when compared with “You” statements as seen in this example:
 - **“You keep on coming late all of the time and I’m getting really ticked off”**
- “I” Statements avoid blaming as they focus on the behavior instead of the person.
- “I” Statements let others know that you trust them to respect your needs by modifying their behavior
- “I” Statements can be taken a step further to clarify what it is you want or need in addition to expressing your feelings about someone’s behavior. For example:
 - **“I feel frustrated when you arrive late and I would like you to try to be here on time in the future”**

The basic model for an “I” Statement is:

“I feel _____ when you _____”

More detailed “I” Statements can look like this”

“I feel _____ when you _____ and I would like _____”

I-statements are often used with the intent to be assertive without putting the listener on the defensive. They are also used to take ownership for one's feelings rather than implying that they are caused by another person. An example of this would be to say: "I really am getting backed up on my work since I don't have the financial report yet", rather than: "you didn't finish the financial report on time!" (The latter is an example of a "you-statement") - *Wikipedia*

Now practice using “I” Statements by reviewing the following scenarios on the next page:



“I” Statements Role Play

Below are some scenarios representing realistic situations people may encounter which may require an assertive response. Role play each situation and practice making assertive responses using ‘I’ statements when possible:

1. You’re working on a project on a weekly basis with someone and this is the third week in a row that your partner has been late even though you got there on time at the meeting place you both agreed upon. Every time he shows up he has a new story as to why he not able to get there on time. How can you address this?
2. Your friend keeps on calling you to get together. In the recent past, this friend has repeatedly let you down by not showing up after you made plans together. Your friend is at the door right now and wants you to take a ride to go somewhere together. How can you express your feelings assertively?
3. You are at work and some of your coworkers want you to go out to lunch. You are really backed up and you know that you should stay back to get some work done and catch up. You try to tell the group that you are busy but they give you a hard time and won’t take no for an answer.
4. People all around you are stressed as you are standing in a long line and suddenly you notice that there is a couple in front of you that was not there earlier. How do you respond to this assertively?
5. You have to take a class and it turns out one of your friends is sitting behind you. Your friend doesn’t seem to care about doing well in the class, but you do. The friend keeps wanting to talk and fool around during the class which is becoming a major distraction for you. What can you do?
6. You’ve been dating someone for three months and you have gotten pretty close in a short time. In spite of that, you realize that this person is not for you. You want to end the relationship but you anticipate this person probably is not going to let go too easily. How can you use “I” statements in this scenario?
7. You have been working on breaking a bad habit and you have made excellent progress recently. A group of friends is reaching out and insisting that you to go somewhere with them but you know that if you go, there is a good chance all of your progress working on your bad habit may go down the drain. The group is working together to put a ton of pressure on you to go. How can you address this assertively?