

Workplace communication

The power of “I” statements

Shifting from blame to connection

“I”-statements

An “I” statement is a way to speak that focuses on your own experience rather than pointing out what someone else did “wrong”. By removing blame, judgment and assumptions, you make it easier for others to hear you without getting defensive.

The 3-part formula

- To build a genuine “I” statement, try this simple structure:
- “I feel [emotion] ... when [action/situation] ... because [impact on you].”
- Other helpful starters:
 - “I prefer...”
 - “I believe...”

Flip the script

See how a small shift in words changes the energy of a conversation:

Instead of saying... (“You” statements)	Try saying... (“I” statements)
“You can never be on time. You are being inconsiderate.”	“I feel frustrated when we can’t start on time. It makes it harder for me to stay organized.”
“You are being disrespectful by ignoring my messages.”	“I feel disrespected when my messages are not answered. Can we find a way to stay in touch?”
“You are not explaining this well at all.”	“I want to make sure I understand. Could you tell me a bit more about how this started?”

Watch out for fake

“I”-statements

Simply starting a sentence with the word “I” does not make it a supportive statement.

- **The trap:** “I feel that you are being selfish.”
- **The problem:** This is still a judgment; it is just disguised.
- **The fix:** A genuine “I” statement focuses only on your own feelings and experience, not a verdict on the other person.

Take it home

- The habits we use at work are often the same ones we use at home. Practicing “I” statements can improve your relationships with your partner, children, and friends. It helps reduce the “low-grade tension” that comes from constant conflict.