

“I” vs. “You” Statements

Assertive Communication uses "I" Statements

It is not selfish to use the word "I." It does not mean that you only care about yourself. Rather, "I" statements are direct, rational, objective and honest. "I" statements show that you are taking responsibility for how you feel and are not blaming someone else for your feelings. "I" statements are factual and non-judgmental.

Example: *“I felt bad when you said that to me in front of my friends. Please do not criticize me in front of them again.”*

In that example, you ask for a change, tell the other person why you want a change, and will hope, but not expect, that you will win. Expressing yourself is the goal—not winning or getting your way.

Aggressive Communication uses "YOU" Statements

The word you is not a bad word, but when used to victimize, judge and control, it becomes an aggressive “you” statement. "You" statements are aggressive because the goal is to change someone else, whether it is their understanding, attitude or even their behavior. Ironically, "you" statements reflect more self-centeredness than "I" statements. Consider the same scenario as in the assertive example, but this time it is expressed in an aggressive way.

Example: *“You made me so mad in front of my friends! Never do that again!”*

Do you notice how the blame is shifted to the other person for causing your feelings? Did you notice the commanding quality of the second statement? As you can see, aggressive statements are insensitive and judgmental. When you retaliate against what you think people are doing to you, you end up being the one who tries to control them! *It's called NAH, NAH, NAH, NAH, NAH, TIT FOR TAT!*

Did you ever wonder why people so out of control spend so much energy trying to control others?