

“I” MESSAGES

Use “I” messages instead of “you” messages. “I” messages help the person communicating to own the message. You state what you feel or think instead of criticizing the other person. When you express your feelings, you are taking credit for them.

Steps in “I” messages:

1. Name the behavior or situation. This part of the message is the issue at hand and involves no judgments.
2. State your reason. Say how the situation or behavior interferes with your wants or purpose.
3. Say what you want done.

Example: I get really upset when you eat out several days a week because it is so expensive and cuts into our monthly savings. Could you please limit your dining out to three meals a week?

Now you try:

Using the above steps, form “I” messages about the following:

1. Your spouse would like to buy a new truck. You would like to pay off the SUV before purchasing another vehicle.
2. You would like to begin budgeting money for retirement. Your spouse thinks it’s a waste of time.
3. Your two sons are very excited about the upcoming football season. They want a new flat screen TV. You feel the investment is not a priority this year.
4. Your daughter is extremely into the latest fashions. She has spent her allowance on new shoes and jeans, but now has no money for gas and school lunches.