

# "I-Messages"

## What are "I-messages?"

"I-messages" are an effective way to communicate, especially when there is a problem. "I-messages" are effective because they don't make the other person feel offended by what you say. "You-messages" tend to blame the other person, causing hurt feelings and stopping the communication process.

### "I-Messages" have two parts:

**Part 1- Describes your feelings, starting with "I feel . . ."**

**Part 2- Describes how you would like things to change.**

**FIRST PART:** Change the following "You-messages" into "I-messages":

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. You really make me angry. | 1. I am feeling upset about this.               |
| 2. You didn't do that right. | 2. I think the job should be done like this.    |
| 3. You keep interrupting me. | 3. I feel that what I'm saying isn't important. |
| 4. You don't understand me.  | 4. I feel _____                                 |
| 5. Your smoking bothers me.  | 5. I feel _____                                 |
| 6. You always confuse me.    | 6. I feel _____                                 |

**SECOND PART:** Describe the things that need to change:

#### First Part

#### Second Part

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. I am feeling upset about this.            | 1. I would like to talk and straighten it out. |
| 2. I think the job should be done like this. | 2. I would like to work on it again with you.  |
| 3. I feel what I am saying isn't important.  | 3. I would like you to listen to me .          |
| 4. I feel you don't listen to me.            | 4. I would _____                               |
| 5. I feel sick when you smoke near me.       | 5. I would _____                               |
| 6. I feel confused when you say that.        | 6. I would _____                               |

## Positive Communication

Read the following situations: in Situations 1-3 practice using "I-messages." For Situations 4 and 5, make up a two-part "I-message" then practice saying it to your partner.

**Situation 1:**                    **You have just started a new job. Your supervisor keeps watching everything you do. You would like to work more on your own.**

"You-Message:"            "You keep watching me and it makes me nervous."

"I-Message," part 1: "I feel like I am not doing the job right when you watch me."

"I-Message," part 2: "I would like to work more independently."

**Situation 2:**                    **You have been teased by two of your co-workers about being the boss' pet. You are concerned and want to talk about it.**

"You-Message:"            "You tease me because you're jealous."

"I-Message," part 1: "I feel bad when you tease me about the boss."

"I-Message," part 2: "I am just doing my job and I wish you wouldn't tease me."

**Situation 3:**                    **One of your co-workers always makes remarks under her breath and rolls her eyes if she has to answer one of your phone lines, even though you are supposed to help each other with calls. You would like to talk about it.**

"You-Message:"            "You act like it's a lot of trouble to answer my phone lines."

"I-Message," part 1: "I feel that you don't like to answer my phone lines."

"I-Message," part 2: "I am happy to help with your lines. Can we work this out?"

**Situation 4:**                    **You can't understand everything your supervisor tells you because he talks fast and has more than one conversation at a time. You want to be able to ask questions and take notes when he talks.**

"You-Message:"            "You talk too fast and you don't let me ask questions."

"I-Message," part 1: "I feel \_\_\_\_\_."

"I-Message," part 2: "I would like \_\_\_\_\_."

**Situation 5:**                    **One of your co-workers asks you to go to lunch every day. He always wants to stop at several places during the lunch hour and is usually late. You like to go to lunch with him but do not want to be late.**

"You-Message:"            "You always make us late getting back from lunch."

"I-Message," part 1: "I feel \_\_\_\_\_."

"I-Message," part 2: "I would like \_\_\_\_\_."