

“You...”

"You have no idea what you're doing."

"You are so lazy."

"You have nothing to cry about."

"You always want the last word."

"You just need to listen better."

"You should give him a chance."

"You better stop that now or else..."

These statements all focus on the infamous "you," the other guy. "You-messages," like those above, are other-oriented. They focus on the other person's shortcomings. They blame the other person for whatever went wrong. "You-messages" call the other person's character into question and minimize the other person's ability to solve a problem. "You-messages" have the negative consequence of hurting whoever the "you" is. They shatter the other guy's positive self-image. These consequences become even more devastating when we consider how many "you-messages" we have sent to our own family members! And, "you-messages" don't resolve conflict; they escalate conflict. They do not result in deeper intimacy; they create distance. If you want to resolve conflict and create intimacy, replace the "you-messages" with "I-messages."

Honor Grace Celebrate

John Salmon, PHD: 412-327-3654
Alicia Salmon, LCSW: 412-897-7402

90 Clairton Blvd., Ste 12
PGH, PA 15236

WWW.HONORGRACECELEBRATE.COM

FACEBOOK: HONOR GRACE
CELEBRATE

TWITTER: HONOR_GRACE



Improve Your Family

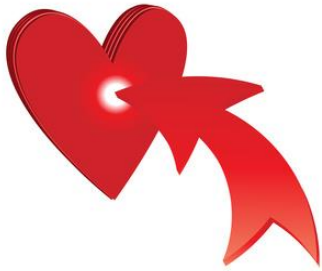
With This

One Honest Change!

Honor Grace Celebrate

“I...”

Replace “you-messages”
with “I-messages”



"I-messages" have four parts.

1. A simple and objective description of the behavior bothering you. Keep this description free of labels and judgments.
2. An honest appraisal of the speaker's feelings about the behavior.
3. An explanation of the tangible, concrete way in which the behavior impacts you. This brief explanation can provide some motivation for the listener to change her behavior.
4. A concrete solution to the problem.

The Benefits

How will “I-messages” help?

As you can see, an "I-message" will take a little more thought; but, it will also accomplish much more. For instance,

- "I-messages" will more effectively influence your spouse, child, or parent. While still giving an objective description of what bothers you, the "I-message" avoids blaming or putting your family members down. As a result, the other person does not feel the need to defend themselves. Instead, they can listen...and consider.
- "I-messages" are more honest about *my* true feelings. When I use an "I-message," I make myself more vulnerable by expressing *my* feelings about a particular behavior. This models honesty...and opens the door for intimacy. We connect with others at our point of vulnerability.
- "I-messages" are less likely to provoke resistance or rebellion. When we communicate objective facts and open up to express personal feelings, there is less "arguable material."



- "I-messages" also communicate trust in your spouse, child, or parent...a trust that they care enough about you to change a concrete behavior that has a negative effect on you.

Most people have to practice to really learn how to drop “you-messages” and use “I-messages” effectively; so, go ahead and practice...make a few mistakes and learn from them. Before long, you'll be using “I-messages” like a pro...and believe me, the results are well worth the effort.