



## "I"-Statements versus "You"-Statements (Key)

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However innocent they may be intended, "You"–statements directed toward you from someone else may sound like and be perceived as an undue accusation or placing of blame upon you personally. "You"-statements can be accusatory and often attack the receiver's self-esteem. Your first reaction, as the receiver of the statement, will be to want to respond in an equally accusatory and defensive manner. Conflict tends to escalate very quickly with this type of communication.

It is best to avoid negative "You"-statements altogether, but sometimes they just "slip out."

**Remaining calm and speaking up for yourself by responding with an "I"-statement to express your thoughts, feelings and ideas – from your point of view – is a much healthier way of communicating.**

Scenario: You have recently shared a personal and difficult problem with a friend in confidence. Imagine how you would feel if the following you-statements were relayed to you concerning your matter of confidence. Complete the activity by responding to the following "You"-statements (negative) with "I"-statements.

Teacher note: Student answers will vary. Here are some possible answers using I-statements.

1. You shouldn't feel like that.  
I believe I have every right to feel this way. My feelings were hurt.
2. You just need to get over it!  
I wish I could but I am feeling very discouraged right now.
3. I can't believe you feel that way.  
I feel upset because she/he should not have said that about me.
4. You are so gullible. Why did you let this happen?  
I was worried that I might get blamed for the incident.
5. You think you are never wrong. Take some responsibility for what is happening to you.  
I want to take responsibility for my actions and no one else's.
6. You have made it a bigger deal than it really is.  
I see how it would look like that.
7. Do you think you're the only person this has happened to?  
I plan to make sure this does not happen to me again.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

How could these comments affect communication between you and your friend?

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Why is it important to avoid you-statements as a form of communication?

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