

# The Impersonal “I” Statement

(Acquaintances, Colleagues, People with whom there is no significant relationship in place)

“I” statements are effective because they clearly state “who owns the problem”, the person bothered by the current situation. “I” statements present the information in a non-accusatory and non-threatening manner. Most people generally need a reason to change behavior. The two primary motivators provided by the Impersonal “I” Statement are the Negative Impact of the Current Behavior and One’s Natural Desire to be Helpful (providing a conflict of interest does not exist.)

1.) **OPENER:** *“I have a problem I could use your help with.”*

2.) **When** \_\_\_\_\_  
(**NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR OCCURS**)  
Active Voice: *“you do XXZ”*  
Passive Voice: *“XYZ occurs”*

3.) **It Causes** \_\_\_\_\_  
(**NEGATIVE IMPACT OR CONSEQUENCE**  
**to YOU or to a GOAL, not a NEGATIVE IMPACT you intend to do to**  
**them if they fail to comply to your wishes**)

4.) **“Could you”** \_\_\_\_\_  
(**REQUEST FOR NEW “DESIRED” BEHAVIOR**)  
*“I’d appreciate it if you could.....”*  
*“Could you help me out by.....”*  
*“Would it be possible for you to.....”*  
*“Would you mind.....”*

5.) **Two-Way Dialogue:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*“Would this be possible, plausible, do-able*  
*“Do you have any other ideas that might help or resolve*  
*this problem?”*  
(N.B. You may actually get a **BETTER SOLUTION**  
than the one you originally proposed!)

6.) **Appreciation/ Thanks** \_\_\_\_\_  
*“Thanks so much for your help/understanding.”*  
*“I really appreciate your assistance with this.”*

# The Personal “I” Statement

(Friends, Family, some work Associates, others with whom you have established a personal relationship)

Personal “I” statements are effective when a positive personal relationship exists. In addition to stating “who owns the problem” and presenting the information in a non-accusatory and non-threatening manner, the “**emotional impact to you**” becomes the strongest motivator to behavior change. Most people generally need a reason to change behavior. Combining three motivators (your feelings, negative impact of their behavior, and desire to be helpful) makes the Personal “I” Statement the strongest request for cooperative behavior change.

1.) **OPENER:** *“I have a problem I could use your help with.”*

2.) **I Feel** \_\_\_\_\_  
(“frustrated”, “confused”, “disappointed”, etc.)  
(NOT: “furious”, “dumbfounded”, “crushed”, etc.)  
Don’t be overly DRAMATIC.)

3.) **When** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR OCCURS)**  
Active Voice: *“you do XXZ”*  
Passive Voice: *“XYZ occurs”*

4.) **It Causes** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(NEGATIVE IMPACT OR CONSEQUENCE  
to YOU or to a GOAL, not a NEGATIVE IMPACT  
you intend to do to them if they fail to comply to your wishes)**

5.) **“Could you** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(REQUEST FOR NEW “DESIRED” BEHAVIOR)**  
*“I’d appreciate it if you could.....”*  
*“Could you help me out by.....”*  
*“Would it be possible for you to.....”*  
*“I need for you to.....”*

6.) **Two-Way Dialogue:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*“Would this be possible, plausible, do-able*  
*“Do you have any other ideas that might help or resolve*  
*this problem?”*  
(N.B. You may actually get a BETTER SOLUTION  
than the one you originally proposed!

7.) **Appreciation/ Thanks** \_\_\_\_\_  
*“Thanks so much for your help! understanding.”*  
*“I really appreciate you assistance with this.”*