

“I” Messages Vs. “You” Messages

“You” Messages:

- “You’re so _____”
- “You always _____”
- “You never _____”
- “It’s your fault that _____”

“You messages” get in the way of effective communication, since they tend to feel like attacks, putting listeners on the defensive – increasing the likelihood that they will attack and blame right back.

This is often what is going on when people say,
“I was just telling them how I felt, and they turned it all around on me!”

“You” messages are often accompanied by overgeneralization (“always/never”) and blame, increasing their toxic power to create division and distrust. They are also so overgeneralized they are often unclear – so actual problems are never identified and solved.

“I” Messages:

- “I feel _____ about _____ because _____”

(Or,)

- “When you _____, I feel _____ because _____.”

“I messages” facilitate effective communication, because they remain focused on the speaker’s feelings, not the listener’s “defects” or blame – so it’s easier to hear and remain open.

Actual problems get articulated, so that actual solutions can be found.