

## “I” Statements for Speakers

“I” statements reduce the tendency of the listener to be defensive because they focus on the speaker’s feelings without placing blame. “I” statements help the speaker accept responsibility for what he or she is feeling and help create empathy with the listener. **Use them when you have some emotion around a behavior or situation.** “I” statements:

• Begin with the word, “ <b>I</b> ”	<b>I</b>
• State the <b>feeling</b> ( <i>see next page</i> )	<b>feel</b> anxious
• Describe the <b>behavior</b> or situation	<b>when</b> we don’t talk together in the evening
• Describe the <b>impact</b> on sender	<b>because</b> this is not what I expected in marriage, and I don’t feel close to you.

Another example of a good “I” statement is: “I feel scared when we don’t stick to a budget because I’m afraid we won’t have enough money to meet our expenses.”

**The job of the Speaker is to:**

- Identify his/her feelings.
- Use an “I” statement to share his/her view. Remember **I FBI**.
- Keep it brief so the listener can stay focused.

Rewrite the following using “I” statements as if you were the person who just made the statements below. See Feelings Inventory on page 7 to help identify feelings.

1. You never pay attention to me anymore.
2. I am so tired of always picking up after you. I am not your mother!
3. You spend too much money – like it grows on trees or something.
4. You are such a couch potato. All you ever do is sit around and watch TV.
5. Quit nagging me; I just want to finish watching the game.
6. Why can’t you learn to cook like my mother?
7. You can’t ever discuss a problem without fighting! I don’t even want to talk to you.
8. You never want to make love.



## Active Listening for Listeners

This exercise will help you identify listening techniques and skills in which you are successful as well as those that need improvement. Mark your answers with an “X” on a scale of 1 to 5.

Action	1	2	3	4	5
	Almost Never	In- frequent	Some times	Often	Almost Always
1. I listen without criticizing.					
2. I listen without prejudging.					
3. I listen without becoming defensive.					
4. I listen without giving advice unless I am asked.					
5. I listen without thinking about my reply.					
6. I let my teammate complete his/her sentences.					
7. I let my teammate finish before stating my view.					
8. I listen for & really try to understand my teammate’s feelings.					
9. I most often look at my teammate while I listen.					
10. I give my full attention when my teammate speaks.					
11. I really try to understand my teammate’s viewpoint.					
12. I look for my teammate’s non-verbal messages.					
13. I repeat back my understanding of both content and feelings.					
14. I ask, “Did I understand you correctly?” and wait for a reply.					
15. I ask, “Is there more?” when my teammate finishes talking.					

Read the list a second time marking an “O” to rate your teammate.

**The job of the Listener is to:**

- Use the listening skills identified above.
- Ensure the speaker feels understood.
- Remember understanding does not mean agreeing.

### Discussion and Plans for Improvement

1. Share your answers with your teammate.
2. Ask your teammate to identify three actions that would improve the way you listen.
3. Record the action number and specifically what you will do for each in the table below.

Action	What You Will Do

4. If you fall back into old habits, how can your teammate remind you that the team has two new plays (“I” Statements and Active Listening). ? I prefer my teammate remind me by saying: