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# ***I Statements*: Talking about Difficult Situations without Blaming Others**

* “I Statements” are the foundation of negotiation skills. They help us to resolve difficult situations at work (and other situations) without: getting upset, blaming other people, or making other people get upset.
* The best "I Statements” are clear statements describing your personal perspective about a difficult situation and making clear how specifically you would like the situation to be changed.
* The secret to success is saying how situation is for you *and not saying what other people should or shouldn't do*.
* “I Statements” also help us to communicate clearly and directly in international settings where people cannot rely on cultural cues or cultural assumptions such as “kuuki yomu” “空気読む”.

**Three Steps**

**1. “When I**…”

Describe a difficult situation involving others without criticizing them or assigning responsibility. Don’t use “you” language to blame other people. Just describe the situation from an outsider’s perspective.”

Example: “**When I** hear everyone is talking at the same time at the meeting,"

**2. “I feel**...”

State your feeling. Use a feeling word. Don’t analyse or judge. Don’t explain why you feel the way you do. Just use one or two words that make clear your feelings,”

Example: “**I feel** stressed.”  
   
**3. “And what *I'd like* is…” or “and what *I need* is…” or “and what *is important to me* is…”**

This is something you personally need to fix the situation (so the problem does not happen again). This is *not something that you want someone else to do. Do not assign blame to someone. Do not say “you” because this makes the problem about that specific person.* Often when we have a problem we assign blame and want someone to do something immediately. But in the “I Statement” we describe what we want generally all people to do. “I Statements” are about what you need from the situation from “people” and “everyone”. So instead of saying “I want *you* to do this” we say the idea to “I want *everyone* to do this and be able to have this”. This makes the situation seem not like a personal problem for one person but respects everyone’s right not to be negatively affected by the problem.

Example:“**And what I'd like is** that people can have some time to be heard without being interrupted.”

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**more Examples**

1. “**When I** am discussing this project with you and we end up shouting at each-other

**I feel** disappointed

**And what is important to me** **is** that we can speak to each-other in a calm manner without interrupting or shouting at each-other”

1. "**When I am** not able to finish a group project on time

**I feel** stressed and uncomfortable

**And what I'd like is** that I am able to complete all my work on time”.

1. “**When I** am planning and running an event and there is uncertainty about who should do which tasks and some tasks are done in a rush at the last minute

**I feel** stressed and frustrated

**And what I need is** clear communication about who is responsible for different tasks.”

(Adapted from “I Statements for Human Rights Conversations” created by Paul Duffill, on 29.10.15. Draws on material from the Conflict Resolution Network available free on their web site: http://www.crnhq.org/)