

## Examples of what to say to ruin your relationship

#1 Constructive	#2 Harmful	Reason
I'm choosing to not go to clubs because it makes my wife unhappy/nervous.	My wife won't let me go to clubs.	#2 Blames your wife and assumes you don't have control. #1 Takes personal responsibility that you can choose to be in a relationship with someone who doesn't want you to go clubbing or you can choose to leave the relationship.
Hey honey, I'm taking the kids to the movies with my mom. Do you want to come along or stay home and have alone time?	I'm taking the kids to the movies with my mom. You can come or not.	#1 Can make your partner feel supported and that you want to include them, however you also want them to take care of themselves by having some alone time. #2 Is more abrupt and doesn't give the same loving message.
I'm sorry that I forgot to take out the trash. I know it means a lot to you that we don't have a smelly kitchen with an overflowing trash. I will set my alert on my phone for next week on trash day so I don't forget.	I'm sorry that I forgot to take out the trash, but I've been working all day and didn't have time at home like you did today, must be nice.	#1 Takes personal responsibility. You have agreed to take out the trash as your chore. If you think the chores are uneven, then talk about it at a time that the chores aren't overdue (or not done). Talking about it when you have disappointed your partner does not help your case. #2 Is passive aggressive. Ask yourself: How do you think your partner would feel after you said #2. Do they deserve that type of feeling when YOU are the one that made a mistake?
Without your child in the room, talk to your partner about what it feels like when they are late and what you think it might be like for your child when your partner is late.	(Talking to your child) You see how mom was late again, she doesn't even care about us.	Bringing a child into an argument or trying to get your child to take your side is harmful to your child and will ultimately put a wedge between your relationship with them. Do not ever talk about their other parent in a negative way in front of the child no matter how true you think the statement is. Ask yourself: Is the conversation with my child helping THEM or helping ME. Your child is not your therapist, don't treat them like your therapist.

## "I Statements": Communicate your needs in healthy ways

Write down a situation when you needed to tell your partner a need and you used an "I statement" to communicate that need?

Rules of "I statements":

1. They are called "I STATEMENTS" and not "YOU STATEMENTS" because it isn't about blaming.
2. Your tone and body language are just as important as the words you choose.
3. Consider giving your partner a compliment or two before your "I statements" (ask your therapist about the 15:1 ratio in healthy relationships).
4. Keep it simple and keep it on topic. Don't bring up a bunch of different issues you have, keep it to ONE SPECIFIC issue. (Don't bring up that they didn't do their dishes and that they ate your left overs AND they fell asleep last night when you were talking AND they pee'd on the toilet seat AND .....).
5. When your partner brings up an "I statement", don't defend yourself by naming all the things they do that are awful. If you want to bring up an issue, then use an "I statement" at a different time. If they made the "I statement" then it's THEIR TURN to talk and be heard. Even if you feel like this was the only thing you have ever done wrong and they have 50 things a day they do wrong.

## "I Statement" template:

### PERSON ONE:

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ (Feeling, NOT a thought) because \_\_\_\_\_.

Tip: make sure you are not saying it in a way that is blaming.

### PERSON TWO:

I hear you saying that \_\_\_\_\_. (Use your own words to repeat what you heard your partner saying. You don't have to agree with what they are saying to reflect back what you heard).

### PERSON ONE:

Yes, that is what I said. ---or--- The part you missed was \_\_\_\_\_.

STAY ON THIS TOPIC, DO NOT bring up other issues until the initial "I statement" is completely discussed. When person one thinks they have been heard, THEN person two can ask to plan a time to talk about a different issue that is important to them.

PERSON TWO: Name something you think you could have done differently and MAKE A REAL EFFORT to do it differently in the future.

## Circle the correctly worded "I STATEMENT"?

I feel FRUSTRATED because last night I did all the dishes and this morning there were dishes in the sink.

---OR---

I feel FRUSTRATED because last night I did all the dishes and then you put more dishes in the sink.

---OR---

I feel FRUSTRATED because you never do the dishes.