

SUMMARY CONCEPTS OF
“I” LANGUAGE

- I. Start every sentence you speak with the pronoun “I”

Examples: “I’m hungry.”
 “I’m happy.”
 “I’d like to go to the show.” etc.

Avoid starting sentences with any of the following:

 “You”
 “Let’s”
 “We”
 “I think you”
 “That is”

Do not make absolute statements such as: “That is the best football team around.”

Most people have been taught to use “you” language and do so, in spite of its inefficiency.
Consider this transaction:

 “Where would you like to go to dinner tonight?”
 “I don’t know. What would you like?”
 “To do whatever pleases you.”
 “But I’d like you to be happy.” etc.

Many words but nothing accomplished.

Compare:

 “I’m in the mood for seafood. What would you like?”
 “I’d prefer steak.”
 “I suggest the ‘Land and Sea’ restaurant. It serves both.”
 “Great.”

- II. Do not use “Ought”, “Should”, “Must”, “Have to”, and similar synonyms.

Substitute instead:

 “I might”
 “I could”
 “I would like to”
 “I want to”
 “I’d love to”

If you can't change a "should" into a "want", reconsider whether it is in your best interest to do it.

III. Eliminate the word WHY and replace with WHAT.

Rather than asking someone "Why are you feeling some way, or why are you upset," try to find out "What is bothering you, in what way, and what you might be able to do to make a change."

IV. Avoid asking questions without making your concern clear first. "Are you getting hungry yet?" usually means "I'm hungry and I wonder if you are hungry too?" "What are you upset about?" usually means "I'm concerned" or "I'm worried that something is bothering you and need to know if I'm reading you correctly."

Don't hide your concerns behind a question. Express the concern then ask the question.

V. "I don't know" or "I don't care" are rarely acceptable. "I don't know, but let me think about it" and "I'll tell you as soon as I figure it out" are sometimes necessary.

However, to leave a response at "I don't know" is not to have looked far enough for the answer, if it has to do with yourself, how you are feeling, what you would like to do, etc. "I don't care" is inappropriate because when asked "What you would like for dinner, Dear?", the response "I don't care" does not actually fit. If you are offered burnt fish, you'd suddenly care quite a lot. If you were home alone, you wouldn't go to the cupboard blindfolded or select a can at random. Even if you didn't have much depth of feeling on the matter, you would make a choice. So express a preference even if that preference is not particularly strong.

VI. Eliminate the words "always" and "never". Substitute "up to now" or "in the past". Human beings are not very accurate predictors of the future. Always and never encompass the past, present and future, often resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies. "Up to now" leaves the future uncommitted and acknowledges the possibility of change.