

1. Letting go of the "blame game " is the first step in using an "I Message."
2. I Messages are about being assertive rather than aggressive or submissive.
3. I Messages are about encouraging the other person to empathize with your feelings.
4. I Messages are about inviting the other person to change their behavior.
5. I Messages are NOT about blaming the other person for your feelings.
6. I Messages are NOT about being a victim
7. You Messages are about blame and tend to make the other person angry and defensive.
8. If you want to start a fight, You Messages are a sure way to do it.
9. Disguised You Messages generally begins with "I think..." or "I believe..." instead of "I feel..."
10. Disguised You Messages are a way of making the other person responsible for your feelings and are a subtle way of blaming the other person.

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I Messages

Start with an affirmation.

I feel { good } when _____ happens
 { bad } { sad } { afraid } because _____
 (And if you receive a positive response.)
 And what I would like to see happen is _____

The I Message

The You Message

You make me _____
 You are _____

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4. The apology may involve regret and guilt. The apology needs to express remorse. A real apology involves pain, suffering and soul-searching regret. It may express your concern that your mistake may have jeopardized your relationship and that you value the relationship.
 5. The apology must express a willingness to change behavior. It lets others know that the mistake will not occur again. Sometimes some sort of restitution is called for. One way of handling this would be to say, "Let me know if there is anything I can do." Or if you broke something of value, you can offer to replace it.
 6. If the offense was made publicly the apology should be public also. It is not fair to offend somebody publicly and then make an apology in private.
- Most of all, an apology is a willingness to let go of the ego and treat another person with respect. It is an expression of honesty. It is a sign of strength rather than a sign of weakness.

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The Anatomy of an Apology

Some of the elements of a genuine apology are:

1. The apology must acknowledge responsibility. The person making the apology needs to take responsibility for having done something wrong. It is an effort to right the balance between the offender and the offended. For example, saying, "I'm sorry that you're upset by what I said," is not taking responsibility for your actions and blames the other person for the upset.
2. The apology must be specific. It names the mistake that caused the harm. It is more than saying, "I'm sorry for what I did." The Apology needs to identify the error that you've made. Generalities will not do.
3. The apology must express how the mistake hurt the other person. It should let the other person know that you understand their feelings. It should express some empathy for the other person. "I understand you were really worried that something might have happened to me when I was an hour late for dinner."

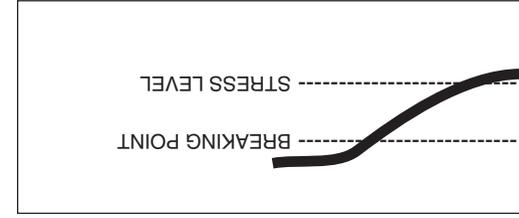
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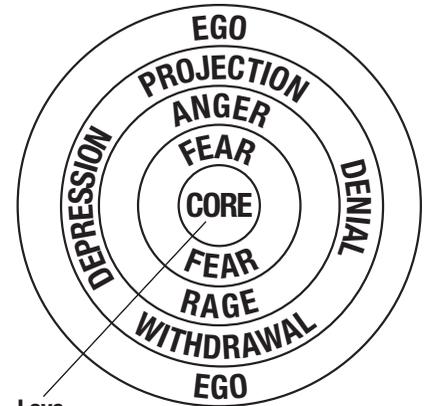
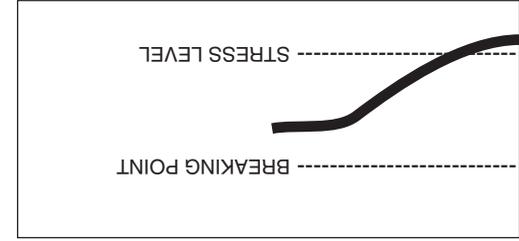
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- We live in a stressful world and prisons are an especially stressful environment.
- We all live with a stress level and we all have a breaking point. The breaking point may be higher or lower in some individuals.
- Diagram A shows that minor stresses may build up until we reach a breaking point. The event that triggers the breaking point may be minor but often produces a major response.
- Diagram B shows that by your lowering stress levels you may be able to keep your anger from reaching the breaking point.
- Take some time each day to lower your stress level. This may be by prayer, meditation, reading, listening to music, working out, talking to family, talking to a good friend, or whatever works for you.
- It is also important to be aware that those around you may be close to their breaking point. Be careful so you do not trigger people who have a short fuse.

Managing Stress



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Love, Caring, Honesty, Spiritual Feelings, Unity, Kindness, Empathy, Transforming Power

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Personality Structure

This diagram shows that everyone has an inner core that is positive. The core is the source of love and caring. It is the part of our personality that enables us to connect with others and with our inner sources of power. It is the source of Transforming Power.

So why don't we stay in our core all the time? When we are in our core, we tend to feel vulnerable. As a result we often cover our positive core with fear.

But, since we feel weak and powerless when we are fearful we often cover up our fear with anger. And anger enables us to feel powerful.

But, since we don't like to go around angry all the time, we cover up our anger with defense mechanisms. For example, if I am angry at you, I project that anger onto you and say, "I'm not angry at you but you're angry at me." Denial, depression and withdrawal are other defense mechanisms.

And then, we cover it all up with our egos, which is the image we present to the world.

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Personality Diagram

Stress Levels