

Translating Evaluations into Observations for Increased Understanding & Connection

Evaluations are interpretations of reality, and often *imply intent* by inferring that someone is bad or wrong, and are likely to provoke a defensive response. Any phrase that follows “*You are ...*” is an evaluation (with the possible exception of actual physical descriptions – “*You are 5’ 7” tall*”). Observations are descriptions of real events (exterior reality - such as how events would be described as if recorded by a video camera) and/or real emotions (interior reality). Observations do not include opinions, interpretations or judgments and are, therefore, neutral by nature and tend to result in greater understanding and connection.

Evaluations **Observations** - accurate and specific descriptions of real events (exterior reality) and/or real emotions (interior reality):

“*You are*”

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| Lying | “ <i>When you tell me that you did your chores but I still see dirty dishes in the sink, I’m confused and hoping you can help me understand.</i> ” |
| Disobedient | “ <i>When you agree to be home at 9:00 but arrive at 9:45, I feel upset because I want to know I can trust you to keep our agreements.</i> ” |
| Disrespectful | “ <i>When you call me a “mean mom”, I’m wondering if you feel disappointed because I did not give you what you want.</i> ” |
| Lazy | “ <i>When you sit and watch T.V. for 4 hours while your chores remain unfinished, I feel concerned because I know your schoolwork is due.</i> ” |
| Manipulative | “ <i>When I agree to do things for you that in hindsight I regret, I feel upset for not fully understanding what I was committing myself to.</i> ” |
| Irresponsible | “ <i>When you agreed to call me if you were going to be late and did not do so, I feel irritated because I want to know I can count on you.</i> ” |
| Inappropriate | “ <i>When you burped out loud without saying “excuse me”, I felt embarrassed because our guests were staring in our direction.</i> ” |
| Rude | “ <i>When you start talking before she has finished, I feel annoyed because it is really important to me that every person be allowed to talk.</i> ” |
| Stupid | “ <i>When you call me “stupid”, I’m wondering if you feel disappointed because you did not like the choice I made?</i> ” |
| Not Listening | “ <i>When she doesn’t comply with my wishes, I get really frustrated because she’s not agreeing to do what I want.</i> ” |
| Stealing | “ <i>When you took my bike without asking permission, I felt annoyed because I would like to decide when and how my things are used.</i> ” |
| Resistant | “ <i>When you are having difficulty committing to a course of action, I’m guessing you feel ambivalent and are wanting more clarity.</i> ” |
| Uncooperative | “ <i>When he does not do what I tell him to do, I get angry because he’s wanting to make his own choices and do it his way.</i> ” |

Evaluations that *imply intent* by inferring that someone has done something to you, often used after the phrase “*I feel ...*” but aren’t actual feelings:

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| Abandoned | “ <i>When you said you didn’t want to see me anymore, I felt really scared because I don’t want our relationship to end.</i> ” |
| Ignored | “ <i>When I asked you a question and you did not respond, I felt annoyed because I would really like to come to an agreement on this issue.</i> ” |
| Attacked | “ <i>When you said “You are wrong”, I felt angry because it is really important to me that everyone’s perspective be considered.</i> ” |
| Abused | “ <i>When you’re mad, call me a “bitch” and slap me, I feel terrified for my life and am worried about the future of our relationship.</i> ” |
| Used | “ <i>When you asked me for a ride to the party but did not invite me to join you, I felt irritated because I was really hoping to be included.</i> ” |
| Blamed | “ <i>When you said “It’s your fault” I felt concerned because it’s really important to me that you take responsibility for your own decisions.</i> ” |
| Cheated | “ <i>When I found out that you charged us different prices, I felt resentful because I value equality and fairness.</i> ” |
| Neglected | “ <i>When you ordered pizza for you and your friends, I felt disappointed because there wasn’t enough left over for me.</i> ” |
| Insulted | “ <i>When you did not thank me for my effort, I felt sad because I would enjoy being acknowledged and appreciated for my hard work.</i> ” |
| Wronged | “ <i>When you make decisions contrary to what we agreed on, I feel frustrated and not confident that I can trust the agreements we make.</i> ” |
| Unappreciated | “ <i>When you suggested ways I could do my work differently, I felt upset because right now I’m just needing some appreciation.</i> ” |