

The Speaker

“Let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.” (Ephesians 4:25-32)

The speaker’s goal: to choose a topic of concern that you would like to explore, and to share your concerns in a way that minimizes defensiveness in the listener

Getting started:

- Make a clear statement about your desires to talk about **one topic** – one problem at a time. For example, *“I need to talk to you about the monthly finances.”* Don’t hint (*“Maybe we could spend some time together”*) and don’t drop bombs (*“Well, the bank is going to take the house this month.”*)
- Check the listener’s readiness to listen and agree upon a time. *“When would be a good time to discuss this?”*

Try the following:

- Introduce the issue you’d like to discuss by talking about yourself, your experiences, and your feelings.
- Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements. For example, *“I am feeling sad that I didn’t get to spend any time with you,”* instead of *“You are always busy and never have time for me.”* If you need to share something negative about the listener, start and end with positive affirmation about them.
- If the listener is causing you to feel unsafe, share what is happening (or could happen) that is making you feel unsafe. For example, *“I am feeling unsafe because your tone of voice sounds disinterested and defensive.”*
- If you have a concern about how the talk might go, start with it that. For example, *“I need to have you listen without the television on.”*

Express your thoughts and feelings:

- Use feeling words to help explain your experience.
- Be honest. Pretending or minimizing is dishonest. Speak the truth in the most loving way you can.
- Be vulnerable. Try not to avoid pain or embarrassment that may be a part of sharing deep feelings.

If you are angry:

- Try and discover the feeling under the anger. Hurt and sad feelings are usually underneath the anger.
- Take a “time-out” if necessary, but don’t use time-out as a way to escape and avoid. The following statement works well... *“I’m getting so angry that I need to call a “time-out” so I can cool down and we will continue this talk in (10 minutes, 1 hour, etc.).”* **Do not** blame, accuse, or name call. This always is destructive.

Contact The Indiana Biblical Counseling Center <https://www.indianabcc.com/>