Conflict Resolution Speak

Most of the time when people feel hurt and become angry because of something someone else has done, they confront each other with accusations in ways that only escalate conflict. Blaming statements usually begin with "You" and focus on the other person in a highly judgmental and negative way. "I feel" statements focus on our own feelings in response to the other person's behavior.

Try using this formula for phrasing "I feel" statements:

When you… (State problem behavior)

I feel… (Express feeling)

Because… (State reasons for you feeling)

Situation #1: A member of your team interrupts you constantly when you are talking.

"You" Statement: *"You're so rude! You never let me say anything!"*

"I feel" Statement: *"When you interrupt me, I feel really hurt because I think that what I have to say is important too."*

Situation #2: Two members of the team are holding the instruction sheet so you can't see what it says.

"You" Statement: *"You guys are always hogging everything!"*

"I feel" Statement: *"I feel left out when you guys have the instruction sheet between you because I can't follow what's going on."*

Situation #3: A member of your team is busy throwing paper wads and talking to members of another other team.

"You" Statement: *"You're such a goof-off. You never help."*

"I feel" Statement: *"When you start doing things with people in other teams, I feel really upset because we need everyone's help to get this project done on time."*

Positive Requests

Positive requests usually begin with "I want you to," "I would," "I'd like you to," and "I need you to."

Negative: "Stop interrupting me."

Positive and specific: "I want you to wait until I'm finished before you start talking."

Negative: "Stop hogging all the cards."

Positive and specific: "I need you to put the cards in the middle of the table so I can see them."

Negative: "Stop messing around."

Positive and specific: "I would like you to fill in the chart with the information from our notes."