

Proven Questions and Sentences

to calm and de-escalate
Discussions
instantly

MINUS

the "I-Statements" and
other tips you heard a million times
but keep forgetting anyway

BY WIEBKE ANTON
HELP4LOVE

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BEFORE YOU GET STARTED... 3 GOLDEN RULES

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6+ GAME CHANGING SENTENCES AND QUESTIONS

Let's put an end to negative and frustrating discussions with these tried-and-tested language tweaks.

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MORE RESOURCES FOR YOU

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ABOUT



Introduction

Sounds familiar?

01

You have read about the famous "I-Statements" more than once. It makes a lot of sense to you.

02

You probably have heard of the "4 sides of a message" and you consider yourself as eloquent human being.

03

You know the ground rule "think before you speak" and try to avoid word such as "never", "always", "every time" during arguments.

04

In theory, effective communication is pretty straightforward.

Nevertheless...

... you are struggling with it.

You were so determined to keep your cool and debate like a pro next time you would get into an argument with your partner. And still things got out of hand and emotions ran high.

I get it.

In theory, effective communication is not rocket science.

In practice, though, it is often a challenge to express your feelings and perspective in an appropriate way, especially while being emotional;

To be able to convey and receive messages means using the right words in the right moment.

Good news:

Sometimes just a few minor tweaks can already help you break this pattern.



Next time, let these tried and tested tips help you to be less annoyed and ask better questions instead, so they sound less like an interrogation.



You may not be able to control when and how often disagreements arise, but you can certainly influence the pace and overall direction of the discussion by following these tips.

Let's take a look at some alternatives that help you change course easily in a heated discussion!



When you *understand* which type of questions and statements you yourself find pushy, intruding, or uncomfortable, it is easier to finally change them in your *own* use of language.

-

Wiebke Anton



CHAPTER
02

Before you get started...
3 Points to keep in mind

01

Communicating differently is like tying your shoes

02

Watch out for the word "why"

03

Discover what is behind the accusation

Continue reading... →

3 POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND



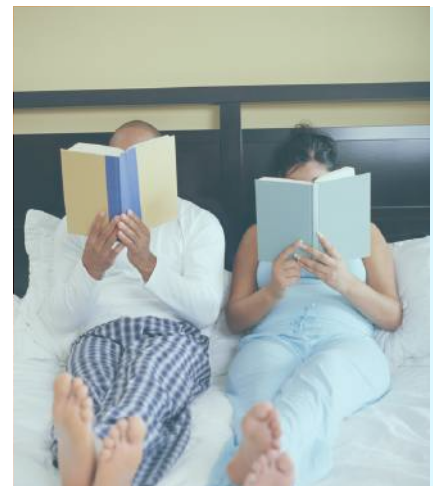
Communicating differently is like tying your shoes

Yes, it is difficult to develop new ways because humans are creatures of habit. We tend to do things the way we've always done them. It's quite normal that doing something new or different feels awkward and clumsy at first. When you tied your shoes as a kid, your hands were cramped and you had to concentrate very hard on every step. While it was unusual at the beginning, you now tie them without thinking about it. It is the same with speech patterns. The more often you try it, the more you find your own natural wording!

Watch out for the word "why"

When asked "Why... (have you, did you, didn't you)" in a discussion, many people respond with resentment, defensiveness, or withdraw. This is because questions starting with "why" are often perceived as confrontational.

Start experimenting with some alternative phrases, e.g. "What led to..." or "What made you..." or "How did you come to..." and see the magic happen 😊.



Discover what is behind the accusation

An accusation usually hides wishes that you or your counterpart cannot (yet) express clearly. The next time you get an accusation thrown at you, try the following: take a deep breath and ask your counterpart: "What do you want? What do you need? Are you concerned about...? Is (actually, in truth)... important to you?"



C H A P T E R

03

**6+ GAME CHANGING
Sentences and Questions**

to improve your communication instantly

01

“

As far as I know...

As far as I remember...

If I remember correctly...

Measures the mutual understanding of a situation and is a good alternative to "But we said/ agreed..." or "But you meant...".

Referring to oneself gives room for an alternative perception.

- As far as I remember, we discussed yesterday that we would meet today at 4 pm.
- Correct me if I'm wrong - if I remember correctly we discussed yesterday that you would be doing the shopping today.



““

Help me understand...

Help me understand how...

I wonder why...

Expresses interest in understanding certain developments or the other person's motives. In doing so, the speaker shows that s*he needs more information to understand the other person's statement or attitude.

- Help me understand why you don't want me to write you any more messages.
- I am wondering why you are saying this, because yesterday we discussed ... and agreed to...
- Help me to understand why this upsets you so much.



03

“

Could you tell me...

Why don't you tell me...

Counters our tendency to interpret the actions of others. Puts an end to guessing. Offers the other person the opportunity to verbalise their views, motives, etc.

- Could you tell me what led you to this decision?
- Please tell me what was going through your mind when I said to you, ...
- Tell me how it happened that you couldn't tell me.
- Surely you had good reasons to react this way, which I just do not understand / know yet. Can you explain to me how it came about that ...



04

“

How do you know that I ...?

How do you determine that I ...?

Helps you find out which *specific* behaviour led to a certain irritation or provocation. Specifically identifies which behaviour or statement was misleading or misinterpreted.

- How did you come to conclude that I don't want to meet you?
- What makes you think I'm in a bad mood and annoyed?



05

“

How can I help you ...?

What would help you now ...?

What could you do to...?

Offers support and resources to address the issue, thus becoming a helper and not an adversary.

- What can I do to make you less stressed in the evening?
- What would help you to calm down now?
- What do you need right now?



“

What would need to happen for you to ...?

What would it take for us to ...?

Looking to the future, the questioner is interested in what options are available and what the other person needs in order to come to an agreement.

- What would be necessary for you to come with me to my parents' house?
- What would it take for you to feel more comfortable now?
- Under what circumstances could you imagine such an arrangement?





C H A P T E R
04

More Resources

Curated for you

Curious about what else there is to learn about better communication, better conflict, and reinventing your couple life?

My coaching programs, audio courses, and workbooks are tailored to help you reinvent your relationship abroad and prepare for the challenges of expat life. Contact me for private coaching and check out my free resources on www.help4love.com/resources.

Here are some of the things you will find in my library. —>

RESOURCES



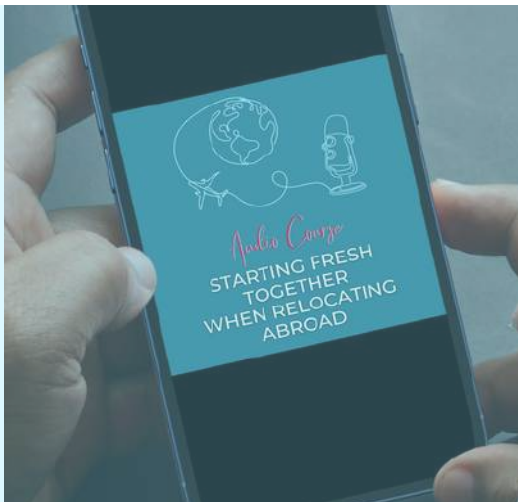
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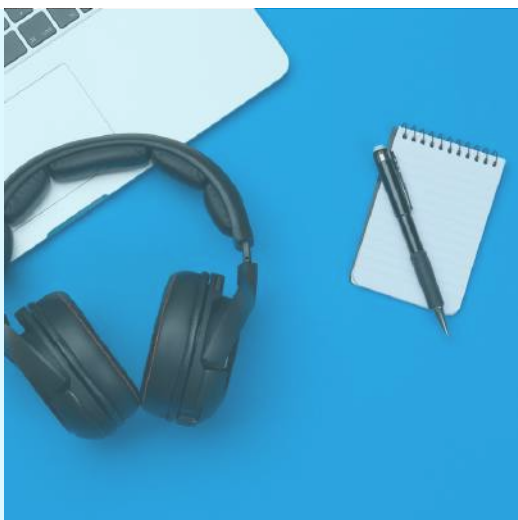
[SEND ME THE QUESTIONS](#)



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A 30-min. audio course for busy couples and individuals who want to take advantage of the opportunity to set **new goals**, create **new habits**, and develop a **new perspective** on their relationship.

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As a guest in several podcasts, I have talked about Expat Dual Career Couples, starting fresh abroad, how to address the challenges of long-distance relationships and couples where one partner travels a lot for work, as well as my own story.

[SEE EPISODES](#)

YOUR RELATIONSHIP COACH

Dr. Wiebke Anton

Certified Relationship Coach,
Mediator



Hi there! Nice meeting you.

I am a certified mediator and relationship coach for people living abroad. I help future and current expat couples to understand and master their relationship challenges so that they can fully enjoy their couple life abroad.

My research-based approach helps expat couples to understand and improve their communication and conflict patterns.

I am passionate about reinvention and resetting relationships, and supporting couples to seize their move to a new destination as a fresh start for their relationship.

**The best time to start working on your relationship
was yesterday.
The next best time is today.**

[MESSAGE ME](#)