

Communication Basics : the Two-Pronged Approach

One sentence, two clauses!

Type I : Positive Positioning [ideal!]

Prong # 1: Positioning (positive+)

Need / Desire / Situation / Issue :

Prong # 2 : Appeal

Request

Examples:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Sweetie, I want to go to movies tonight | : | would you like to join me? |
| 2) Honey, I am running a bit late today | : | can you be a sweetie and prepare dinner? |
| 3) My bunny, the kids are really sick this morning | : | could you get some Vicks cough drops for children? |
| 4) Sweet face, my book is just beside you | : | would you be a sweetie and hand it to me? |
| 5) Sweetie pie, I'd like to have a barbecue tonight | : | can you prepare the meat, and I'll do the salad? |
| 6) My love, the dishwasher is broken | : | can you contact the repairperson to have it fixed, my sweet love? |

Type II : Negative Positioning [proceed with caution!]

Prong # 1: Positioning (negative)

Dissatisfaction :

Prong # 2 : Appeal

Request

Examples:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1) There are no vegetables in the grocery bags | : | would you be a sweetheart and get some broccoli and cauliflower? |
| 2) I really don't like this red colour on the wall | : | do you mind if we get more of a blue tone instead? |
| 3) When you know you have to work late | : | would you kindly let me know in advance? It would be so sweet of you. |
| 4) My sweet face, there is no milk in the fridge | : | could you get some while I make lunch? Mouah! |
| 5) Sweetie, I'm very hurt by your comments; I'm sure you didn't mean to hurt me | : | can you hold me tight so I can feel close to you? |
| 6) Honey, the dishwasher broke again | : | would you kindly contact the service person once again? What would I do without you?! |

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Exercise: Practicing the Two-Prong Approach!

Transform each example (i.e. wrong way to express a need) into the two-prong approach (i.e. with a clearly expressed need).

Example (wrong!) : *The kids are really sick today!*

They're going to need medication.

Prong #1:

Prong # 2:

Need/desire: The kids are sick and we're out of medication ; Request: Would you be a sweetheart and pick up some *Benlyn Cough Medication for Children?* That would be great.

1) You always arrive late!!! It's like I don't matter to you!!!

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

2) Why do you always have to criticize what I do?! It's so annoying!!!!

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

3) We're out of milk... again!!!! Do I have to do everything around this house!?!?!?!?

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

4) You've left your friggin' clothes all over the floor again!!! What's strong :-) with you?!?!?!?!?

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

5) You were so rude to me in front of your family last night. You can be such a *&%\$#@ sometimes!!!!

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

6) Do you want to go for a walk in the park? (fyi, this is actually a set-up type question... yeah!)

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

7) Did you take out the garbage like I asked you politely this morning?!?!?!?! Or do I have to take them out myself once again!?!?!?!?

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

8) You never listen when I talk!! I always have to repeat myself and even then it's a total waste of time!!!! I've had it (with you!!)!!!

Need/desire: _____ ; Request: _____

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Suggested answers below

(see below)

Suggested Answers : Practicing the Two-Prong Approach!

1) You always arrive late!!! It's like I don't matter to you!!!

Need/desire: Sweeties, if you know you will be arriving late... ; Request: ...it would feel so good if you texted me to let me know in advance... this way I would not feel worried and it would be a reminder that you care about me.

2) Why do you always have to criticize what I do?! It's so annoying!!!!

Need/desire: Honey bunch, clearly you are dissatisfied with me... ; Request: ...can you let me know what's the problem/ what you want or need from me?

3) We're out of milk... again!!!! Do I have to do everything around this house!?!?!?!?

Need/desire: Honey bunny, guess what? We're out of milk... ; Request: ...would you be an absolute sweetheart and pick some up? It would make me feel warm and fuzzy.

4) You've left your friggin' clothes all over the floor again!!! What's strong :-) with you???!?!?!?

Need/desire: My sweet, when you have a moment this morning...; Request: ...can we both pick up the clothes and put them in the hamper? It would mean a lot to me.

5) You were so rude to me in front of your family last night. You can be such a *&%\$#@ sometimes!!!!

Need/desire: Hun, I have something difficult to share with you. Last night, I felt humiliated in front of your family. I'm sure you did not mean to do so... ; Request: I'd like you to keep private anything that has to do with our sexual life? It's really important to me.

6) Do you want to go for a walk in the park? (be careful with this type of set-up question for both yourself and the other... yeah!)

Need/desire: It's nice out and I want to go for a walk in the park...; Request: ...would you like to join me (my honey bunch)?

7) Did you take out the garbage like I asked you politely this morning?!?!?!?! Or do I have to take them out again myself!?!?!?!?

Need/desire: Poopoo, I notice the garbage are still inside the house... ; Request: ...would you be a sweetheart and take them out?

8) You never listen when I talk!! I always have to repeat myself and even then, it's a total waste of time!!!! I've had it (with you!!!!)

Need/desire: Sweetie, I really need to feel listened by you... ; Request: ...can you tell me what you hear when I say: "... ..."?

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