



Learning to Use Positive Emotional Expression

A Therapeutic Model developed by Phillip Bass of Trinitas Services

Reflect. How we express a feeling shapes how it lands. The same underlying need can be voiced as blame (Structure) or as vulnerability (Nurture). Notice the difference between the columns below, then practice translating your own “Structure” statements into “Nurture” ones.

Structure Says <i>Negative Emotional Expression</i>	Nurture Says <i>Positive Emotional Expression</i>
“You are always working.” “You never have time for me.” “You never give me any attention.”	“I miss you.” “I’m lonely.”
“You never do anything around here.” “Why can’t you at least take the trash out?”	“I need help.” “I’m overwhelmed.”
“You need to do ____.” “Why aren’t you doing ____?”	“I worry about you.” “I want to make sure you are safe.” “I’m not feeling safe.”

Negative Emotional Expression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes “facts” • Focuses on the other (blame) • Is insulting • Parent / Child communication 	Positive Emotional Expression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes emotion • Focuses on self (vulnerability) • Is complimentary • Partnering communication
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What My Structure Says: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	What My Nurture Says: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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“We all want the freedom to be ourselves, yet we are most afraid of being ourselves.”

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