

Softened Start Up

“96% of the time you can predict the outcome of a conversation based on the first three minutes of a fifteen minute interaction.”

Dr. John Gottman

Horseman Antidote
Criticism → Complain Don't Blame

NO criticism, only talk about your own Feeling.

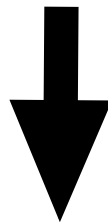
I Feel (an emotion) _____

I Need _____

In What Situation _____

For Example

Instead of saying, “ This makes me mad, all you do is work, then come home and don't even pay attention to me or the kids.” - Criticism and Possibly Contempt



Say this, “I get lonely or insecure when you don't pay attention to me, when you come home from work.”

Rules for Softened Start Up

- * **Start the conversation gently - complain don't blame.**
Criticism often attacks another persons character, using words like "never" and "always"
 - * Effective complaining includes;
 - * Being nonjudgmental
 - * Expressing your feelings
 - * Describing what you need
- * **Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements**
 - * Psychologist Thomas Gordon noted that when statements start with the word "you" instead of the word "I" they are more likely to be critical and making your partner defensive. NO cheating and making a "you" statement look like and "I" statement such as "I don't like it when your mean."
- * **Describe what is happening, don't evaluate or judge**
 - * Instead of accusing or blaming just be descriptive
- * **Talk clearly about what you need in POSITIVE TERMS**
 - * State the things you hope or wish for, what you want more of, (not what you don't want)
- * **Be polite**
 - * Add phrases such as "please....." and "I would appreciate it if you would...."
- * **Give Appreciation**
 - * Focus on what your partner is doing right and voice that appreciation.