



Love & Relationship Quizzes, eBooks for Couples  
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## Healthy versus Unhealthy Complaining

### Stating our Needs and Getting our Needs Met

Most arguments are a failure by one or both parties to express what they need. Add to that, frustration and emotional intensity, and you get the picture! When we complain to our partners we are in actuality stating our needs in the wrong way. Instead of saying, “I would like it if you would give me a hug,” we say, “You don’t show me love anymore.” There is longing and need in every complaint we make. If we can re-word our statements into asking for what we need, we are more likely to get what we want, and a positive response.

### Bids for Connection

When one person turns away from the other, it can feel very lonely for the person feeling rejected. That person may use a bid for connection: A touch, a complaint, a compliment or expression of gratitude. Often we use negative words to get positive outcomes and that does not work because the other person just gets defensive. If you can hear what the longing is beneath the complaint, it is unlikely to escalate to a fight. It is crazy how we don’t say things in a direct manner. Sometimes the best question to ask our partners is: “What do you need from me right now?”

### Baby Talk and Healthy Complaining

Both people in a relationship deserve to get their needs met as much as possible. Obviously, it is not possible to get one’s needs met 100% of the time, but it is only fair that both parties get it. Sometimes we have to break down what we want into simple phrases. I mean, babies and toddlers get their needs met and say it with the fewest words. “Bottle,” “mum”, “teddy”, “hungry”, “kiss.”

Complaint example: “Why do you never take out the rubbish!”

Longing and need in a sentence: “I would like to feel more like a team with household chores and cleanliness is important to me as a homemaker, because I want people to think well of me.”

Complaint example: “You never text me during the day anymore.”

Longing and need in a sentence: “I need to feel special and connected to you when I haven’t seen you for hours.”

Complaint example: “We never have sex anymore.”

Longing and need in a sentence: “I would like to feel intimate and close to you. Please show me that you love me.”

Complaint example: “You never help me with the baby.”

Longing and need: “I need you to tell me I am doing a good job as a mother.”

If you express your needs from an “I” point of view, instead of using “you”, it is not taken as an attack or blame.

“You don’t love me anymore.” (Personal, accusatory)

“I feel very unloved at the moment and would like it if you would hug me,” (States experience, no blame)