

CRISTY BURNE

I WAS

“I WAS” STATEMENTS FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION

AKA: I was going to rant / attack / get defensive / say nothing ...

... but then I remembered this excellent strategy for communicating my perspective 😊

The I WAS statement

Much like I-statements, I WAS statements help you express your perspective and needs, without making other people feel defensive or attacked.

I WAS statements include a shared goal, framed as your motivation for speaking, which helps keep everyone on the same page.

To avoid leading with “You always...” or “You make me feel....” (which triggers a defensive reaction), an I WAS statement leads with your perspective on a problem, and what you suggest as the solution to help achieve a mutual goal.

The basic structure of I WAS statements

I feel / I noticed...	[Start with your perspective]
When...	[The problem]
And I would prefer / suggest...	[The proposed solution]
So...	[The shared goal]

Hot tips for using I WAS

- 1) Stick to the facts
- 2) Avoid exaggeration
- 3) Focus on the goal, not the person

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Examples of “I WAS” statements

Urgent tasks and scheduling

I have noticed...priorities become unclear
When...competing tasks arise
And I'd prefer...a quick check-in to align on priorities
So... we can focus on the most important deadlines.

I feel...conflicted
When...priorities change mid-week
And I'd prefer...clearer direction on what comes first
So... I know where to focus.

Meetings and discussions

I feel...like we're talking in circles
When...we interrupt each other while speaking
And I suggest...we each finish our point before taking feedback.
So... we can have a more productive discussion.

I have noticed...a cascade effect
When...meetings run over
And I'd prefer...to stick more closely to time
So... our other commitments can be given the attention they need.

Conflict or tension

I feel...like there's potential for confusion
When...feedback is rushed
And I'd prefer...a more detailed check-in
So... I can fully understand what needs to improve.

I have noticed...we lose momentum
When...we don't agree on next steps
And I'd prefer...to clarify that now
So... we can move forward productively.

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Setting boundaries

I feel...conflicted

When... new tasks are added without reprioritising existing tasks

And I'd prefer...to have focused blocks of time

So... I can protect my calendar for deep work.

Want more? Work with Cristy

Are you ready to think more creatively,
communicate more powerfully, and thrive
through change?

[Cristy Burne](#) is an award-winning author, keynote speaker, science communicator and creative learning specialist who combines science, storytelling and adventure to help people reimagine what is possible.



Drawing on a career that spans CERN, CSIRO, Queen Mary University of London, World Expo and two science circuses, Cristy speaks on creativity, communication and future-ready human skills in an AI-driven world.

Highly entertaining, inspiring and energising, Cristy's workshops and keynotes blend humour, theatricality and practical insight to inspire audiences to embrace uncertainty, courage and the power of great communication.

[Connect with Cristy to find out more.](#)

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