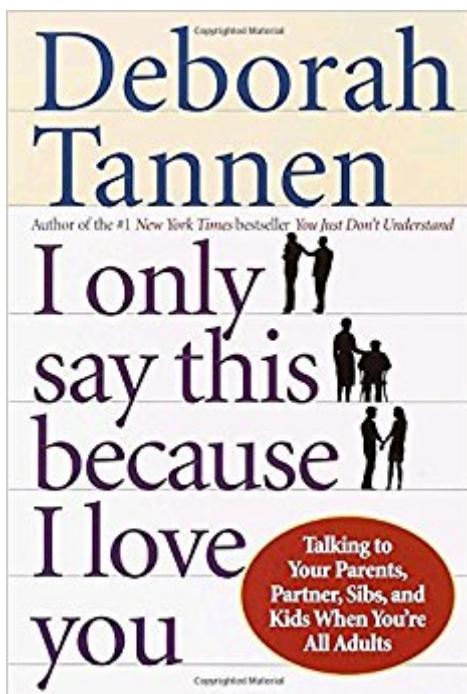


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# I Only Say This Because I Love You: Talking To Your Parents, Partner, Sibs, And Kids When You're All Adults



## Synopsis

Why does talk in families so often go in circles, leaving us tied up in knots? In this illuminating book, Deborah Tannen, the linguist and bestselling author of *You Just Don't Understand* and many other books, reveals why talking to family members is so often painful and problematic even when we're all adults. Searching for signs of acceptance and belonging, we find signs of disapproval and rejection. Why do the seeds of family love so often yield a harvest of criticism and judgment? In *I Only Say This Because I Love You*, Tannen shows how important it is, in family talk, to learn to separate word meanings, or messages, from heart meanings, or metamessages — unstated but powerful meanings that come from the history of our relationships and the way things are said. Presenting real conversations from people's lives, Tannen reveals what is actually going on in family talk, including how family conversations must balance the longing for connection with the desire for control, as we struggle to be close without giving up our freedom. This eye-opening book explains why grown women so often feel criticized by their mothers; and why mothers feel they can't open their mouths around their grown daughters; why growing up male or female, or as an older or younger sibling, results in different experiences of family that persist throughout our lives; and much, much more. By helping us to understand and redefine family talk, Tannen provides the tools to improve relationships with family members of every age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Everything we say to each other echoes with meanings left over from our past experience--both our

history talking to the person before us at this moment and our history talking to others," says Deborah Tannen, one of the world's most famous linguists. We react not only to the message, but to the "metamessage": our interpretation of the unstated meaning, based on tone, relationship, and our past associations. Add in the connections and control issues among family members, and it's no wonder families have so much trouble understanding each other! *I Only Say This Because I Love You* is aimed mostly at adult family interactions. Professor Deborah Tannen, the popular author of *You Just Don't Understand*, uses anecdotes filled with dialogues to illustrate why we hear criticism when the other person meant to convey caring, how family members create alignments with secrets and broken confidences, the dynamics of arguments, the power of apologies, gender patterns in family talk, and communication with teens. You're bound to recognize your family members--and yourself!--in Tannen's examples. You won't find quick, easy answers for improving communication in your family, but you will discover another dimension of understanding what's really going on. Now if you could just get your mother to read the book! --Joan Price --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand* set tongues wagging across the country in the early 1990s with its analysis of gender differences in speaking styles. Now the linguist and author of numerous other books turns her attention to patterns of speech within families. Though the subject is not as sexy as in her mega-bestseller, most readers are apt to hear themselves in these pages. For example, Tannen asserts, in many situations the mother serves as "Communications Chief" as well as chief critic. Drawing on sample conversations from an ongoing study at Georgetown University, from memoirs and from TV documentaries (including *An American Family*, which examined the Loud family of Santa Barbara in 1973 and reveals how little family interactions have changed in the past 30 years), she convincingly shows how threads of family history and emotion add weight and complexity to everyday exchanges. Each conversation, she argues, carries meaning both in its actual words and in the underlying relationship and attitudes it expresses (e.g., "I didn't criticize you. I just asked a question"). She also shows how speakers may use language for connection and control, influencing shifts in family alignment. Like its predecessor, this book is neither scholarly nor overtly self-help-oriented. Its advice is embedded in its examples, though occasionally Tannen offers explicit guidelines, such as rules for fair fighting: stick to the facts; avoid insults, sarcasm and exaggeration. Parents of teenagers may also find some good insights in Tannen's clear-sighted analysis of how clashing frames of reference undermine communication. Agent, Suzanne Gluck; first serial to *Good Housekeeping* and *Modern Maturity*. (May 10) Forecast: Tannen's 13-city author

tour (including a May 14 appearance on the Today Show) will help ensure this book's visibility, but it's more likely to match the respectable (but not stellar) numbers for Talking 9 to 5, her book on workplace speaking styles, than those for You Just Don't Understand. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This gave a lot of examples of what miscommunication looks like and how these kinds of things happen in relationships, Tannen fails to give any real applicable uses for the information - like how to be sure that you don't say/do the things she talks about. It took me forever to finish this because of that. It did offer up a lot of good points, it just fell short in what I was looking for in a book like this.

A good book but if you haven't yet read "you just don't understand" you should get that book first or instead of this one. This one rambles and repeats a bit too much for my taste.

I read this book for a conflict resolution course I took through my university. It is an easily digestible read that changed the ways I view communication and conflict in my interpersonal relationships. I highly recommend this for anyone who wants to improve their relationships!

I loved Tannen's You Just Don't Understand because of the fresh insights it provided, so I was especially disappointed when I Only Say This Because I Love You failed to provide the same feeling of discovery and excitement. The book focuses on the frequent difference between the actual words that are spoken, and the meaning behind the words (meta-message), which is often about trying to create more connectedness or to alter the power and control dynamics of the relationship. I found it interesting, but not revolutionary (and I'd come to expect revolutionary from Dr. Tannen). By understanding the meta-messages both from ourselves and from others, we should have more power to address the meta-messages directly and not get involved in petty bickering and emotional responses that go nowhere except round-and-round. Overall, I would say that the book contains useful insights and helpful advice, but for people who have already spent time analyzing their intimate relationships, there's probably not much new.

I wish everyone had a chance to read this book before getting married or involved in a relationship of any kind with another person. It is the one book that really provides useful and thought-provoking information on how to talk to the people we love, instead of the often harmful ways we do talk to them. Tannen shows that it is possible to change destructive communication into constructive, even

helpful, communication. Well worth every penny you spend on this one!

Tannen is a great writer and a great linguist. She continues her wonderful job of explaining what people mean when they say things; sometimes they don't even understand what they are communicating when they speak. Another wonderful book by Tannen

Would that it were true that family relationships came down to the words we use when we talk to one another. Tannen tries to wrestle complex family dynamics into conversational styles, and fails dismally. Much of the "insights" are superficial, suggestions for improving relationships minimal, and the examples provided are tedious and boring. I had high hopes for this book but it provided little that was useful to me.

I have not finished but am very pleased so far. It really includes all those closer to you and describes how to basically "watch your words" when dealing with them..

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