



Solutions for Life

from **Solutions Counseling & EAP**
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Trust Me!

I read an article recently about the importance of trust in the business world. I realized as I was reading, I say a lot of the exact same things in therapy sessions with couples. Business and personal relationships really are all about trust. And when trust is broken, while it can be repaired, generally a scar of some sort is left.

What is trust? Trust is when I can count on you to follow through with whatever you said you would do. Be it a marriage vow, a business contract, or simply your word, if you committed to it, I need to know you will do it. If I don't believe you will follow through, then I am going to start pulling away to protect myself so you can't hurt me.

In healthy relationships, where people truly connect, trust is a major factor. If I trust you, I don't need to protect myself. I can make myself vulnerable with you. I can be honest. I can disagree and know that our relationship will be fine. Imagine the impact in business if it's OK to disagree, safe to share ideas, and everyone knows that promises are kept. Now, apply those same principals to any relationship you can think of. Talk about creating an environment for success!

Relationships of all kinds are basically a series of agreements. I agree to come to work at a certain time. We agree to not yell at each other or call each other

names in our marriage. I commit to my child that I will be a good example. When agreements are kept, the relationship grows. When agreements are not kept, distrust ensues.

There are other things that can diminish and even kill trust. If I avoid conflict and refuse to discuss things that are uncomfortable but need to be addressed, I will not be trusted. If I micromanage you and don't allow you to make decisions, you will not trust me. If I have bad news, but don't share it so you get blindsided, you will not trust me. Trust is about openness, a desire to share the load (be it good or bad), and a belief that the other party will do what is right.

How do you increase trust? You have to work on it. It does not develop on its own. You have to consciously note when you agree to do something, that your follow through or lack thereof will impact the relationship.

Here are some other ways to build trust:

Be Transparent. When I am working with couples where a transgression has occurred, we talk a lot about transparency. Don't wait to be asked where you are; tell your partner before he/she has to ask. When asked a question, don't be squirrely; answer directly and completely.

Be Compassionate. As a leader, you must express care and concern for your employees. If they feel you don't view them as people first and employees second, they will never trust you. Get to know them. Ask about their families. Genuinely be interested and listen.

Have Character. Do the right thing no matter what, and no matter who is watching. Be the person you know you need to be. Live your life according to your values. It's who you are when no one is watching that determines your character.

Be a Contributor. You can't build trust from the sidelines. You have to get in there and show that you are willing to do whatever you are asking others to do. People like working with someone, not for them. So, get out of your office at work, and your recliner at home, and do your part!

Be Consistent. Steadiness builds trust. No outbursts. Conversely, no apathy. Stable emotions and commitment to excellence makes that person want to continue in their relationship with you.

If you'd like to learn more about trust, I encourage you to embark upon therapy. It's a great way to learn about yourself, and, more importantly, help you become the person you would like to be – trustworthy!