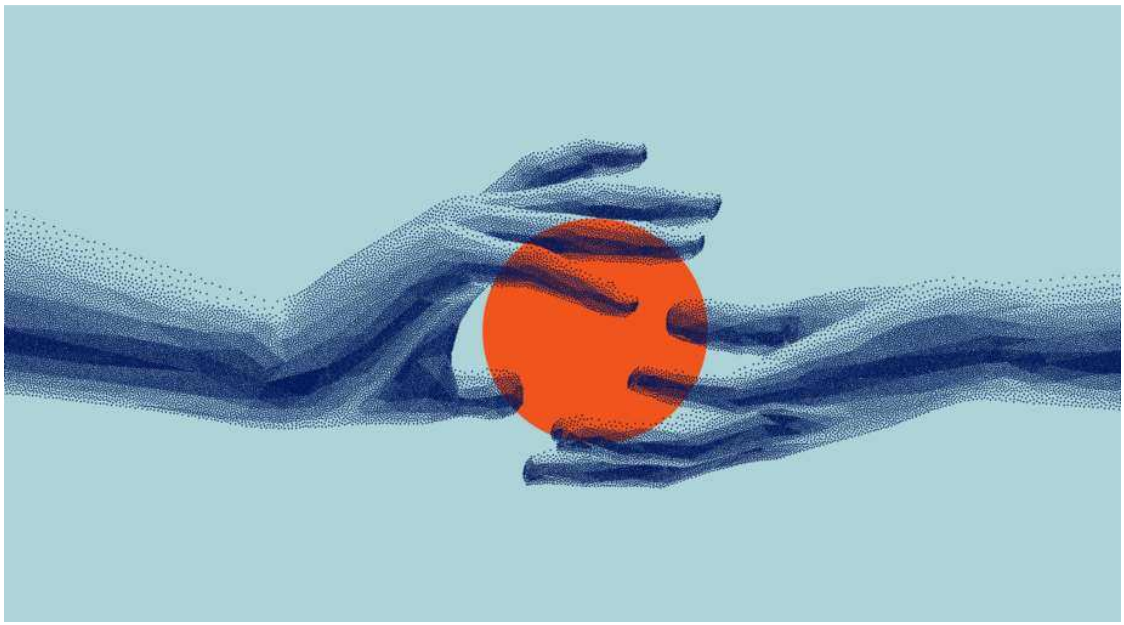
Building Trust

The following article is based on a longer and more in-depth examination of Trust in relationships. Our intent is to expand on the topic of trust in a way that allows the readers to reflect on ways in which they might be able to build trust more quickly and more reliably in relationships.



By Stewart Ramsay, Vanry Associates

— Habits and beliefs about trust

You might view trust from a perspective that is very definitive — one way or the other. Many of us tend to see trust as a personal trait or characteristic of another. We view our assessment of trust as the truth about another person, or something that we have to test or that they have to prove. We tend not to look at ourselves and instead accept our assessments of the other person as fact. We believe or know that trust is important, yet we allow it to stay in the background rather than deliberately build and strengthen it.

— A useful interpretation of trust

We suggest that trust is an assessment or opinion that we each make about someone or something

- It is not fact — rather it is a view that we formulate and hold

- Your trust of others is based on an assessment formed with thoughtfulness and supported by evidence
- Others' trust in you is based on a grounded assessment they make of you, that you have influenced or impacted through your actions and behaviours

From Stephen Covey's book *The Speed of Trust*

"Trust is the one thing that changes everything".
Lack of trusting produces significant human and financial waste.

↑ Trust = ↑ Speed ↓ Cost
↓ Trust = ↓ Speed ↑ Cost

A grounded assessment of trust should include consideration of the following:

- What concern are you trying to take care of by making this assessment?
- Is it domain specific or is it all-encompassing?
- What timeframe is involved?
- What standards are you applying and are they shared by others?
- What facts or assertions do you have in support of your view?
- What new action can you take as a result of this assessment?

Trust is an attitude that we have towards people whom we hope will be trustworthy, where trustworthiness is a property, not an attitude. Trust and trust worthiness are therefore distinct although, ideally, those whom we trust will be trust worthy, and those who are trustworthy will be trusted. For trust to be warranted (i.e. plausible) in a relatonship, the parties to that relationship must have attitudes toward one another that permit trust. Moreover, for trust to be warranted (i.e. well-grounded), both parties must be trustworthy.

Trusting requires that we can, 1) be vulnerable to others (vulnerable to betrayal in particular); 2) think well of others, at least in certain domains; and 3) be optimistic that they are, or at least will be, competent in certain respects.

CAROLYN MCLEOD
"Trust", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

— Typical concerns related to building trust

You might wish to:

- **Strengthen relationships** personally, professionally, or even with yourself

- **Coordinate action** more effectively with others
- **Build your dignity** — specifically through self-declarations about who you say you are
- **Enhance your public identity** and specifically your reputation. The view that others hold of you as a person or as an organization, often referred to as 'trustworthy'

— Trust is...

About changing a relationship with others and ourselves for the better — something which:

- We create, build and sustain with our declarations, commitments, promises, emotions and sense of integrity
- Resides internally in you versus externally in someone else
- Is created and bestowed by human effort and intent in a social practice with others — rather than being simply there
- Is generated through human effort and intent; it is always dynamic and flexible; never solid and never gone

Trust is often implicit in the relationship

- Mostly in the background of the relationship and assumed
- We become more aware of trust when there is a significant change in its status

If trust in a relationship is strong, then that trust may be extended to another by correlation or association

- For example, you refer a friend to your accountant and then your friend — based on the strength of their trust in you — hires the accountant
- If this type of trust is present it can be leveraged to accelerate alignment amongst teams and expedite coordination of workflow(s)

— Trust is not...

There are things that trust, or trusting is not:

- To be taken for granted
- There from the beginning
- A matter of good luck
- Familiarity with someone
- Simply reliability or predictability (more below)
- Following rules
- Only about the individual, independent of the culture and social situation
- A quality embedded in another person that is either there or not that makes the person trustworthy or not
- A general feeling or vague idea we have about someone or a situation, such as thinking 'I feel I can trust her'

One common misconception about trusting people is to equate trust with reliability

- i.e. "I can trust him if he behaves in predictable and hopefully positive ways"

People are ever changing and ever growing, adapting and learning therefore trust amongst humans is not as simple as trusting something tangible

- We can have confidence in that which is reliable, i.e. we are confident the sun will rise and set daily

But trust is <u>not</u> about predictability

- While we often predict what people will do, this is not the same as trust
- Trust is relevant in the face of unpredictability
- Predictability and probability are secondary to mutual expectations, responses and commitments

— Common barriers to trust

Some of the more common, significant barriers to trust, or trusting are:

- **Lying** which always destroys trust, whereas telling the truth builds it
- **Cordial hypocrisy** — a pretence, pretending that trust in a particular relationship is higher than it actually is
- **Cynicism** is an attitude, or mood, that refuses to trust — it is a closed door
- **Denial** is a stronger obstacle to trusting than distrust
- **Selfishness** is incongruent with trusting
- **Naivety** where we expect to receive more trust than we are willing to give

"Cordial hypocrisy: the strong tendency of people in organizations, because of loyalty of fear, to pretend that there is trust when there is none, being polite in the name of harmony when cynicism and distrust are active poisons, eating away at the very existence of the organisations."

FERNANDO FLORES AND ROBERT C. SOLOMONS
"Building trust: In Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life (2003"

— Types of trust

Basic trust

- Basic trust (*named by Erik Erikson, psychiatrist*) begins without thought or reflection in infancy and provides a general orientation to the world, later developing into a set of attitudes and practices that become established in childhood
- For adults, basic trust is the belief in the overall moral order of things

Simple trust

- An extension of basic trust, simple trust is trust that remains unthinking and unreflective in us as mature adults

- Trust that is not given, is taken for granted and goes unchallenged
- The attitude is one of assumption, not a decision based on deliberation, having considered the ethics or evidence within a situation
- Because it exists by automatic assumption about the way things are, it was never given by choice and therefore cannot be recovered if lost or betrayed.

Blind trust

- Denial is the primary strategy of blind trust
  - Blind trust is evident when someone has been presented with evidence for distrust, and not only rejects it, but denies its existence
  - It is essentially self-deceptive

Self-trust

- This is the first place to focus as self-trust is required for the practice of building trust with others
- The ability to trust oneself wisely and authentically, including our motives and cognitive integrity
- Remaining open to self-reflection and self-scrutiny
- Includes healthy skepticism, requiring we trust our self-critical abilities

Authentic trust

Trusting another is a choice, a decision, made authentically and willingly, given and bestowed on another

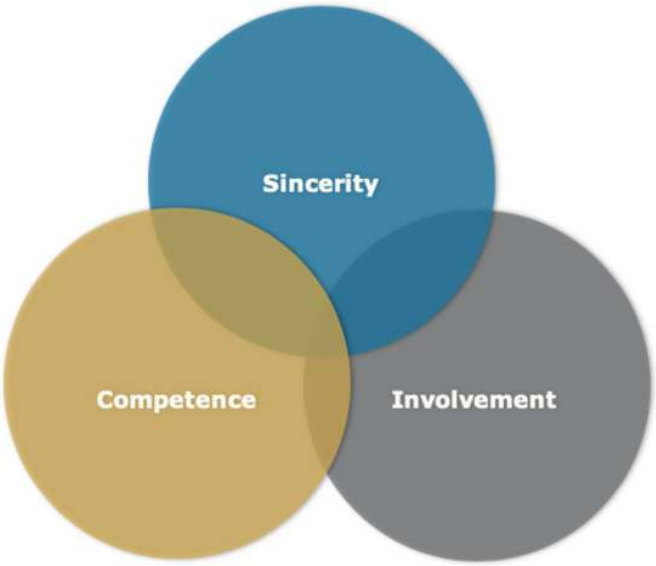
- Authentic trust is a relevant aspect in all relationships: yourself, others, groups, organizations, the market and society
- Authentic trusting opens the space for more freedom in inventing a future together
- In addition to being a declaration, authentic trusting is also a set of assessments and competencies, an emotional skill, and a dominant mood
- Self-trust is the foundation on which authentic trust is built
- Authentic trust enfolds and accepts distrust, disappointments and betrayals as part of the landscape of trusting and chooses to continue trusting in the relationship to some extent
- Authentic trust is always conditional, focused, qualified and therefore limited, knowing and accepting the associated risks and liabilities of the situation

High trusting relationships add value to both the human experience of the relationship itself, as well as the results the relationship produces

Low trust acts as a kind of tax in which human suffering occurs, along with inefficiency and ineffectiveness in producing results

— Three elements of trust

Trust is a composite of three equally important elements — sincerity, competence and involvement



Making useful assessments about another person's trustworthiness requires thoughtful consideration:

What particular standards are you applying to another person when making this judgment? What standards have you applied for sincerity; for competence; for involvement? Have these standards been shared, discussed and mutually agreed to? Many trust issues occur when standards are not discussed or are unrealistic for the situation or area. What concrete observations, facts or evidence can you offer to support your judgments?

Sincerity

Sincerity is about genuinely demonstrating consistency between what you say and what you do

- You align your actions with what you say
- You honour your commitments and promises (including promises others hear that you may not have intended)
- You don't operate with hidden agendas or ulterior motives

We each choose our own starting point about the sincerity of others

- The assessments are not the truth; they reside in you about others and in others about you

Sincerity, if damaged, is often very difficult to rebuild

- It is also the most binary of the three elements of trust, leaving us either open or closed to trusting another person

Tips for assessing sincerity

When you judge another person's **sincerity**, it is your assessment of how coherent this person is about their intent and word.

- It is important to notice the personal standards you are choosing to use when you declare a person has, or hasn't, met your expectations for wether they "mean what they say".
  → Sometimes your standards for success of your expectations, while perhaps appropriate for you, are not appropriate for the circumstance.

- It is critical to reflect carefully as to wether or not you are deliberaly choosing your standards for assessing the other person's consistency or not.
  → Further complicating this is the fact that your standards and expectations are learned, or unconsciously adopted, earlier in your life.

- Are you expecting what is reasonable from this person under the circumstances?
  → Are you setting the bar too high? Or too low?
  → Could you be setting the other person up to fail?



Advertising, continue reading below

Competence

This is about being able to demonstrate that you have the ability and capability to deliver in specific areas

- It is a view held by another (or by you about the other person) that you deliver consistently, repeatedly and on time
- It is a view held by another that you are ‘count-on-able’ — you know how to deal with the situation and that if you don’t know how they can be sure you will get the help you need

- It is a grounded assessment about a specific domain and is not about you, or another person, as a whole
- It is situational, you may trust someone to care for your children, or make the presentation to the board of directors, while not trusting them to do brain surgery on you because you don't see that they have any experience in brain surgery.

Breaking promises, missing deadlines and not being able to deliver consistently all have a negative impact on assessments of competence

Tips for assessing competency

When you judge another person's **competence**, it is your assessment about the likelihood that they will actually be able to carry out the commitment they're making.

- How would you define this area of competence? What is it? What is it not?
- What expectations or personal standards do you have in this area?
- What do you actually think competency looks like? What does 'sufficiently competent' look like?
  → Are you expecting this person to behave like they have a PhD in this area (when they don't)?
  → Are you expecting this person to be performing equivalent to a kindergarten student when they have had 20 years of experience in the area in question?
  → What is reasonable under the circumstances?
- Now, what do I think this person is capable of compared to my standards?

Involvment

This is about you being mindful of and tuned to what is important to the other person, both for a particular workflow and more broadly

- They know that in a meeting, you will speak for them and address an issue in the way that they would want it addressed
- Your actions are fully consistent, whether or not you are in their presence
- You remain strongly connected to them over time
- You are committed to continuing to take care of what's important to them over the duration of what you are involved in together

Tips for assessing involvment

When you judge another person's **involvment**, it is your assessment of the extent to which that person is aware of what really matters to you and to what extent they will take into account

- What are the personal standards you are choosing to use for such terms as fully consistent, strongly connected or care?
- What does sufficient involvment look like to you? Are these reasonable standards in these circumstances?
- Other questions you miht ask:
  → Have I taken the time to show the other person what matters to me?
  → Am I expecting them to read my mind?
- Are your expectations of this other person reasonable?
  → Are they too low?
  → Or so high that no one could satisfy them?

— Rebuilding trust

In authentic trust, you should expect that there will be let-downs, disappointments, rejections, or betrayals and that such breaches of trust might change your relationship with another. Depending on the extent and magnitude of the betrayal, the relationship might not return to its previous level of trust. However, there is always the possibility the relationship can be reinvented or rebuilt.

Rebuilding authentic trust requires practices in:

- **Bringing a mood of hope**
  - Having a positive outlook on the future sets the mood for rebuilding trust
  - Resignation is looking backward and is not a supportive mood for rebuilding trust
- **Forgiveness**
  - Forgiveness is a social or spiritual practice in response to betrayal, rejection, being offended, hurt or misunderstood
  - Involves a series of actions, not simply a state of mind
  - Might require healing, time or assistance from others to work through

There are two alternatives to forgiveness that are consistent with authentic trust:

- **Compensation** — something awarded to someone as a recompense for loss, injury, or suffering
- **Genuine empathy** — with the ability to understand and share the feelings of another we build some ground on which to move forward and negotiate future interactions

There are two alternatives to the practice of forgiveness — **neither of which are consistent with authentic trust**:

- **Revenge** — the action of inflicting hurt or harm on someone for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands
- **Resentment** — a feeling of bitterness or indignation at a circumstance, action, or person

Using authentic trust to deal with disappointments or betrayals

Level 1: 'Things didn't work out'

- No one's fault — simply part of everyday living
- Acceptance is easy in these situations

Level 2: 'Mistakes'

- Mistakes may be disappointing and if frequently made, very irritating
- Some mistakes are attributable to a person; other times it is not clear
- Authentic trust works through this, versus writing off the relationship (trust does not equal reliability)

Level 3: Disappointments due to 'fate'

- No one person is to blame, and it is just part of what happened, e.g. accidents
- Acceptance is the authentic trust orientation in such cases

Level 4: Breaches of trust — blameworthy actions

- Requires an apology — a sincere statement of an intention to redeem oneself and the beginning of a conversation
- Beware of excuses offered instead of an apology

Level 5: Indifference

- A lack of sufficient caring in the relationship — may range from simple inattention to intentional and shameful disregard
- Requires an explicit conversation, perhaps an apology (if authentic) and negotiation on how to go forward with this relationship

Level 6: Insincerity

- Making insincere requests, offers, promises, commitments, apologies
- As above, explicit conversations are needed for mutual understanding and moving ahead

Level 7: Lying, wholesale insincerity

- Some of us tell small lies (aka white lies) for the sake of protecting other's feelings — we might not see this as a short-sighted view of caring
- We may also tell lies to protect ourselves from consequences of our actions
- The philosopher Immanuel Kant offered the view that lying is a violation of the humanity of the person lied to and a denial of their dignity (links to legitimacy)

Level 8: Reneging on promises or breaches of contract

- Promises and commitments can be successfully re-negotiated
- This breach is more related to never intending to fulfill or deliver, rather than changing circumstances, more like an intentional lie

— Becoming more trustworthy ourselves

In *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen Covey proposes a set of 13 behaviours you can do to become 'trustworthy' in the view of others and to help build and repair others trust in you — all of which are congruent with authentic trust.

Behaviour	How to improve
Talk Straight	Be honest. Tell the truth. Let people know where you stand. Use simple language. Call things as they are. Demonstrate integrity. Don't manipulate people nor distort facts. Don't spin the truth. Don't leave false impressions.
Demonstrate Respect	Genuinely care for others. Show you care. Respect the dignity of every person and every role. Treat everyone with respect, especially those who can't do anything for you. Show kindness in the little things. Don't fake caring. Don't attempt to be "efficient" with people.
Create Transparency	Tell the truth in a way people can verify. Get real and genuine. Be open and authentic. Err on the side of disclosure. Operate on the premise of, "What you see is what you get." Don't have hidden agendas. Don't hide information.
Right Wrongs	Make things right when you're wrong. Apologize quickly. Make restitution where possible. Practice "service recoveries." Demonstrate personal humility. Don't cover things up. Don't let personal pride get in the way of doing the right thing.
Show Loyalty	Give credit to others. Speak about people as if they were present. Represent others who aren't there to speak for themselves. Don't badmouth others behind their backs. Don't disclose others' private information.
Deliver Results	Establish a track record of results. Get the right things done. Make things happen. Accomplish what you're hired to do. Be on time and within budget. Don't over-promise and under-deliver. Don't make excuses for not delivering.
Get Better	Continuously improve. Increase your capabilities. Be a constant learner. Develop feedback systems—both formal and informal. Act upon the feedback you receive. Thank people for feedback. Don't consider yourself above feedback. Don't assume your knowledge and skills will be sufficient for tomorrow's challenges.

Behaviour	How to improve
Confront Reality	Take issues head on, even the “un-discussables.” Address the tough stuff directly. Acknowledge the unsaid. Lead courageously in conversation. Remove the “sword from their hands.” Don’t skirt the real issues. Don’t bury your head in the sand.
Clarify Expectations	Disclose and reveal expectations. Discuss them. Validate them. Renegotiate them if needed and possible. Don’t violate expectations. Don’t assume that expectations are clear or shared.

Trust is crucial in our ability to work together effectively. It takes work and focus, like anything of value. If we want to build and maintain trusting relationships, or trust in transactions, then we need to plan for it and ensure that we are including actions and approaches to build and maintain trust.

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