

## It's About Trust

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As trite and corny as this sounds, it is true. Every day we are dependent on trust. Take for instance, driving: we trust that people will obey the lines, lights, signs, and directions along the road. Or an example from working together: we trust that people will do what they say so that we can do what we need to be able to do.

Trust in some cultures is given freely and only taken away when the trust is broken. In other cultures, trust is something to be earned and achieved. When interacting with others, here are some of the keys to building and maintaining trust.

Start by listening. Genuinely listening to what others are saying includes putting aside your own biases and preferences to hear what other people's needs, wants, hopes, and desires are. Then, having listened, you can make a better decision based on more information.

Next, keep confidences when you've heard information that is not meant to be shared. When in doubt, ask "is there something you'd like me to help with? Or something you'd like me to do with this information?"

Help solve problems when asked. Offering unsolicited help can alienate others. When asked for ideas or solutions, engage in the conversation to help others move through frustration and into problem-solving.

Act on ideas and follow through on commitments. Once an agreement for action has been reached, follow through and make sure the actions happen in the manner and timeframes committed.

When interacting at work, at home or in the community, be aware too of these sure-fire ways to break trust and even loose relationships: talking about things you weren't meant to repeat; not doing what you said you'd do; doing something inconsiderate or mean; or repeatedly making decisions that are self-centered and not focused on the good of a larger purpose or group of people. Once broken, trust is very difficult to regain.

Once gained, trust is sometimes difficult to retain. Trust – it is an action of commitment, truthfulness, and confidence tempered with care and respect. Actively build and maintain trust in all of your relationships so that you have the best relationships possible.

Action Item: Identify where trust exists in your workplace and focus on how to maintain it. Also identify where trust doesn't exist and start building it – or get out of the situation you are in.

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