

Three Elements for Becoming Trustworthy

By Julie Fuimano, Personal Development Expert & Coach



A key element in creating a team is establishing trust. Most people are familiar with environments where trust is absent where you cannot simply be yourself for fear of reprisal or ridicule. So instead, you shrink, hide your true self and create a façade, play the game and work the political landscape just to survive. All of this takes a lot of energy, causes stress, and produces a work environment where people are not free to be creative, explore possibilities, and share ideas. People often think that other people are just like them so people who don't trust themselves often have difficulty trusting others. This perpetuates the distrustful environment. In his book "The Four Obsessions of the CEO", Peter Lencioni offers that trust is a key component of healthy organizational environments "marked by an absence of politics, unnecessary anxiety and wasted energy." An environment of trust feels good and brings out the best in people.

So, as a leader, how do you create an environment of trust? It all starts with you. Can you honestly say that you trust yourself? If you cannot trust yourself, then how can you expect others to do so? In thousands of ways over the course of a day, you teach people about the kind of person you are. "Who you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say," says Ralph Waldo Emerson. Learn to trust yourself and that translates to how others treat you. This requires you to be more intentional about your behavior and then learn to communicate directly what you expect from others.

Julio Olalla of the Newfield Network delineates three elements of trust: reliability, sincerity and competence. Let's explore those elements so you can develop them in yourself and also, when you feel you cannot trust someone, identify which element of trust you are experiencing in this person. In this way, you can address your specific concern with that person.

Are You Reliable?

Do you do what you say you will do? Do you say "yes" to things without thinking about what you're agreeing to? Have you ever said "Let's do lunch" without any intention of ever seeing the person again? Every word you utter has meaning. There is always an impact even if you are unaware of what that impact may be.

Dependability is a key component of trust. Whenever you speak, consider the consequences. Become a person who honors their word, meaning that you do whatever you say you'll do even if that commitment is to yourself. For instance, if you have no intention of dieting tomorrow, then don't say you will. Setting an intention to do something or making a commitment to follow through on a particular goal is not something to be taken lightly. Consider what you're willing to do to make it happen. If you're unwilling, unable or don't have the time, then don't say you'll do it. There are many reasons why people have a hard time saying "no" even though they know they cannot complete the task. These include people-pleasing, needing to be liked, concern over what other people think, or the "superman/woman" mentality. There is also the person who is so unhappy that he stays busy to avoid his reality.

Coaching Tip: Before you say anything, consider your words carefully. Only say "yes" to what you can commit to following through with. Each day, find little ways to follow through on what you say. If you're not sure you can complete a task then use your words to convey that. It's essential you learn to keep the promises you make to yourself. When you learn to keep your word to yourself, you take yourself seriously and that translates to others over time who will also learn to take you seriously. You become someone who is reliable and who honors her word. You will be treated with respect when you first treat yourself with respect.

Are You Sincere?

How you say what you say conveys trust. To be sincere means to be authentic. To be authentic means to be transparent. This means that you are clear; people can see through you – there is nothing clouding or impeding the view. This is not easy to achieve and yet it is the path to revealing your true self and to feeling good about who you are. When you take your words seriously and speak your truth with conviction, people perceive you as sincere. Then when you follow through with what you say, that solidifies their faith in you.



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Are You Competent?

Do you have the skill to perform the request at a certain level of excellence? If you don't and take on the task anyway, it won't be completed the way it needs to be. Why are you taking on a task for which you are not the best suited? It goes back to why you have difficulty saying "no". There may be other obstacles showing up here including not wanting to disappoint others, again, not knowing how to say "no" to a request, perfectionism, procrastination or an inability to set timely schedules for yourself or use your time effectively. When you hold yourself out to be an expert at something but are not capable of performing to the specifications needed, you are, in essence, lying. This causes you stress because you are out of integrity. It also makes you look bad and can result in a negative reputation.

Coaching Tip: Are you the best person for the job? If not, say "no!" Don't take on projects that you cannot handle. Only do those things for which you can excel. You want to become known as a master and you cannot excel at things where you don't have the skill or talent. Be honest with yourself about your level of skill and then seek out the appropriate education if that's what you want. Be truthful with others about your capabilities and learn to ask for help when you need it. There is nothing more humbling than asking for help and yet it demonstrates your humanness. Welcome to Club Human.

Whenever you breach one of these elements, you decrease your trustworthiness. If you apologize to the person – especially to yourself – then it softens the impact and you can regain some ground in developing yourself as a trustworthy person. Accepting responsibility for your truthfulness, your words, actions and follow through, demonstrates your commitment to yourself and to your evolution as an adult.

Learning to trust yourself has huge implications for your life. When you trust yourself, you recognize trust in others so you know when you can count on someone or not and make better choices about who you surround yourself with. You also feel better about yourself. When you honor your word, you build your self-esteem. Learning to say "no" to what you don't want or what is not beneficial for you means you can learn to say "yes" to those things that are the best use of your time. This means more joy and less stress for you. This sounds simplistic but it is very difficult in practice. Just keep practicing. Each day offers you a new opportunity to test your trustworthiness and with each try, you'll improve.

Julie Fuimano, MBA, BSN, RN, CSAC is named one of the TOP 100 THOUGHT LEADERS in personal leadership development. Your happiness and success is her business! Her coaching clients experience dramatic and profound results in their productivity, level of confidence, and their relationships. As a certified coach, accomplished writer, and motivational speaker, Julie empowers your personal best and teaches you simple, practical tools for meeting your goals, communicating effectively with others, and enjoying yourself at work and at home. Visit www.NurturingYourSuccess.com to learn more about coaching with Julie or contact Julie@NurturingYourSuccess.com to have her speak at your next meeting or conference. Subscribe to her blog at www.NurturingYourSuccessBlog.com.



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