

How To Build Better Relationships

“The building block of Trust

Part 2

Intro: We all know you can't have strong durable relationships without trust. Trust is an essential building block for better relationships. It's foundation. Relationships without trust crumble and fall apart. It works this way in every relational environment from marriage / family / friends / co-workers / churches. Trust is essential. BUT, how does one grow trust? How do we continue developing it in all our relational environments? How can we build trust back into a relationship when trust has been destroyed?

- Today we will explore the five ingredients that develop relational trust. We're going to describe this in a way every person here can work on this issue.
- Some of these concepts today come from a book “The Power of the Other” by Dr. Henry Cloud. I simply have expounded on them a bit more and brought in scripture to see these are things God has said all along.

1. Understanding

- When we believe someone understand us, we will naturally have trust in that person. The greater the level of understanding, the more life and trust you build into your relationship.

Prov. 16:22 “Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it...” (NASB)

- Relational understanding = relational life. This is why when you believe someone “gets you”, you automatically begin trusting that person.
 - Men, the more your wives believe you truly understand her, the more she will trust you.
 - Ladies, the more your husbands believe you truly understand him, the more he will trust you.
- Please hear this: The issue is not if YOU think you understand another person. The issue is if THEY BELIVE you understand them. It is only if they believe you understand that builds trust.
- Why is this so powerful? When you feel understood, you feel valued. Being understood makes you feel loved / important / validated / significant. Being understood is life giving.
 - One of the first times experiencing this as an adult was in 1992 – Master program at Multnomah - Explain
- The opposite is also true. A lack of understanding creates mistrust. When you believe someone doesn't get “you”; doesn't understand you're thinking / feelings / what makes your heart tick / what lights you up and what shuts you down; it sucks the life out of any relationship.

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- Lack of understanding erodes trust. We will never trust people who do not understand us.
- Here in lies one of the great problems of raising teenagers. They are convinced mom and dad do not understand them. “You don’t understand!” AND, they are right most of the time.

How do we grow understanding in our relationships?

- Seek to understand before being understood

This is what the word of God encourages us to do.

James 1:19 “Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” (NLT)

Just think about how much more understanding we would have if we employed this principal in all our relationships? Stop working so hard to get your point across. Be quiet and listen first.

- Here is a simply phrase I want you all to practice in your relationships. “Help me understand...”
- Learn to ask more questions to gain more understanding.

- Strive to understand the person not simply their words

Remember the movie Avatar? (explain - pic) There was a phrase they used when they greeted each other. They would say; “I see you”. The greeting implied they saw into each other. They saw the true person. I love this.

- Isn’t this what we all long for. We all want to be seen...understood...known. Does anyone see the real me...does anyone value the real me?

What would happen in our relationships if we made it a priority to truly understand another person first? If we spent more time understanding, then we could live this biblical principal. *Prov. 12:18 “Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal.” (GNT)* Words that come from understanding bring healing.

2. Right Motives

This is an obvious one. We do not fully trust people if we question their motives. When we believe people have the right motives, trust increases.

I Thess. 2:3 “So you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery.” (NLT) Here is the Apostle Paul assuring a church about his motives so they continue to trust His leadership. Motives and trust simply go together.

- For example: Why is it so difficult to trust our political leaders? Because many people struggle believing the motives are right. What kind of motives make people automatically mistrust?
- Any motive that is perceived by others being self-promoting / self-elevating / self-serving / self-centered / is going to erode trust. Any motive where self is out in front

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is going to destroy relational trust in your marriage / family / with co-workers / church.

So what right motives develop relational trust?

- Motives that elevate others develop trust

Phil. 2:3-4 “Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.” (NLT)

- People can determine our motives by observing our actions / words / and attitudes. Every person you meet your brain automatically and unconsciously begins to scan these issues to determine if this person is for us or against us. Your brain is deciding if they can be trusted or not.
- If your words, your actions and your attitudes do not value others, people will not trust you. Therefore, if your actions are all about you, your words are mostly about you and you have a self-elevating attitude, trust is eroded.
- If you are married this is huge. Spouses must get better at looking out for the interests of the other spouse. What do I mean? It means each spouse does whatever communicates value to the other. My motive is to elevate and serve you.
- Therefore, if this means we cook together / do dishes together / go the Mall together / even change grandbaby diapers...I will gladly do these things.
- It also means she will take drives with me up in the woods / enjoy nature together / fishes with me /
- We are intentional at looking out for the interests of one another. This builds trust.

- Motives that sacrifice for others develop trust

Phil. 2:5 “You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.” (NLT)

- Jesus sacrificed His life for us. He put Himself last so we could have life. We have to stop thinking that sacrificing for another is being a relational doormat. This is not how Jesus lived and it is not what this principal means.
- Most people who see the willing sacrifice of a person for the sake of another will trust that person.
- Please understand this issue: The sacrifice must be perceived by the other person that it is sacrificial. This is why to say to your kids or a spouse; “I sacrifice and work hard so you can have these things.” Will always fall on deaf ears. WHY? Because you’d have a job whether or not you were married.
- Here’s an assignment: Ask your spouse what sacrifice means to them? Ask your kids? Ask your co-workers.

3. Ability

Ability = Trust. What do I mean? Let’s think about having a surgery. 4 years ago Lisa had a surgery to correct chronic acid reflux. The surgery was called a fundoplication. Which means they were going to wrap her esophagus around the top of her stomach. Her surgeon was

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one of the leading experts in this very surgery. Now, would we trust this leading surgeon more or a resident surgeon who is learning how to do this surgery? Ability = Trust.

- I realize this plays out in surgery, but what about relationships in general? How does ability build trust in my relationship?
- Are you demonstrating and growing in relational abilities?
 - The ability to listen
 - The ability to understand
 - The ability to control your temper / manage your emotions
 - The ability to control your tongue / not say mean things.
 - The ability to meet the needs of your spouse
 - The ability to stay within a financial budget
 - The ability to parent
 - The ability to sacrifice for the sake of another
 - The ability to show up on time

Luke 16:10 “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones...” (NLT) This is a statement about ability. Consistent ability = faithfulness.

- We understand this issue in the job setting. There are simply certain people at work we trust more because they have demonstrated a higher ability to get the job done.
- Are you growing trust in your relationships because you are growing in your relational abilities? If you are continuing to fail at relational abilities then don't expect people to trust you.

4. Character

We all know that character is important for trust. The word of God tells us that the development of our character is a priority to God.

Rom. 5:3-4 “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.” (NLT)

It's obvious that good character is important for trust...BUT we need to go beyond defining character as simply honesty and morality. Character has to do with the entire person.

Webster: “the complex characteristics of mental and ethical traits marking and often individualizing a person.” Therefore, character is made up of many various factors that we often ignore. Like what? Our character is made up of not only what we do, but also HOW we do it. Often, it is HOW we do things that causes people to trust us. We tend to think about character only in black and white – right and wrong terms. BUT, it is more complex than this.

- Are you optimistic or pessimistic? I will tend to trust an optimistic person who did the right thing vs a pessimistic person who did the right thing.
- Are you proactive or passive?

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- Do you persevere and problem solve or wilt under pressure?
- Are you too soft in conflict / too hard / too rigid / too impulsive
- Are you good at listening to the opinions of others?
- Do you always have to win?
- Can you find joy in elevating those around you?
- Are you forgiving? Are you compassionate?
- For example: Part of my character / personality is intense. I can get pretty impassioned about things. Early on in our marriage I discovered this had a very negative effect on my marriage – Explain – If I didn’t learn to manage the intensity, I would destroy trust. Therefore, we came up with a solution.
- You may be doing things relationally that are destroying trust that you are completely oblivious to. Will you allow others to help you grow in this?
- I believe things like this help us grow in strength of character like the bible talks about. This growth is character = trust.

5. Track Record

If you develop a consistent good track record over time, people tend to trust you. The bible calls this a good reputation. The only way to develop a good reputation is to be consistent with the right things over time. In other words...a good track record.

Prov. 22:1 “Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.” (NLT)

I Tim. 3:2 “So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation.” (NLT)

- If you’re in a situation where you need to rebuild trust because it has been lost, this is how you do it. You must begin building the track record. You must consistently demonstrate you are sold out to living in a manner that builds trust. This is not perfection, but it is consistent.
- Track records take time. The longer the track record, the greater the trust and influence. This is why a good reputation is so priceless to pursue.
- The reason many of you trust me as your Pastor is this principal. I have a 32 year track record in this community. A 20 year track record as the pastor of Foothills. Although I am broken and flawed just like you, we are growing and learning together. We are recklessly following Jesus together. There is tremendous trust because of the consistent track record we have together. Believe me when I say it is a very precious thing to me that you all trust me like you do.
 - Why is Billy Graham one of the most trusted men in America?
- What kind of a relational track record are you creating? A Faith track record / a character track record / marriage track record / serving track record
- Track records are not created in weeks or months; they are created over years and decades. BUT, the trust that comes from this is worth it all. You see, your track

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record becomes your legacy. It is your example you leave to your future generations. I want my grandkids to be inspired by their Papa's track record someday.

So, are you living in a manner that is building trust?

- Understanding
- Right motives
- Ability
- Character
- Track Record

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