



Practice Strategies for Trust

Trust is a function of the length of the relationship, expertise, and the quality of communication **all factored by the other's perception of risk.**

As we discussed, trust is shared and goes both ways. The factors that we can influence are expertise and quality of communication. The really tricky factor is the perception of risk. It's hard to see and difficult to mitigate. So quality of communication becomes a critical factor.

Here are some exercises for you to reflect on trust and your relationships:

Personal Exercise #1:

Take out a piece of paper and write down four people whom you trust. By each name, write down the elements that influence your degree of trust. Is it because they really know what they're talking about? (Expertise) Because you fully understand them? (Quality of Communication) Because you've known them a long time? (Time) Because you feel safe with them — you don't feel the need to defend yourself? (Little perceived risk)

Likely, you'll notice that it's not any one factor that builds your trust; it's probably a combination. As you look at your notes, is there a factor that dominates in your relationship? Is this a person you've known for years?

One who's word is always true? One whom it just feels good when you're with them? Consider these elements and realize how much is at play in a trusting relationship.

Now, shift your thinking over to a business relationship you have that you'd like to improve. Maybe it's someone in your company that supports you... or a new customer you'd really like to do business with...or that thorny, difficult customer who's always complaining? What element(s) could you focus on in order to increase trust?

Personal Exercise #2:

Take out another piece of paper and write down several of the specific ways you feel most valued by others. It may be eye to eye, through words of support or concern, or perhaps you feel most strongly valued when others simply listen to you or encourage you to speak up, or hold you accountable to your best, or ask what you feel rather than just what you think, or recognize and reward your efforts in some special way.

Next, write down the names of the four people who are most vital to your success at work. Beside each name write two specific ways each of these individuals feels most valued by you. Are you treating them accordingly from day to day? Do you know for certain what these two ways are? Most of us need to ask. Only with this kind of genuine feedback and clarity can we truly relate to each person as an individual and build trusting

relationships based on emotional intelligence instead of hidden assumptions, which can turn out to be unintentionally demeaning and untrue.

Looking Ahead

Trust is so fundamental to relationships. As we progress each month, you'll find out how poor communications can interfere with building effective relationships. Next month, we'll look at a key too to being understood when you talk. Stay tuned.

Remember if you want to talk with us about How To Who, just send me an email at support@HowToWho.com and tell me what you want to discuss. I'll send you the access information so you can join us. We talk on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 3:00 PM Eastern Time.

