

I DON'T TRUST YOU!

Dave Kraft

It all starts with trust or ends with the lack thereof

When it comes to business, family (just about anything having to do with relationships), trust is critical. Probably one of the worst things anyone can say to another person is, *"I don't trust you."*

When a husband or wife says this to their spouse, it can be the beginning of the end of the relationship whether they continue married or not. When an employee says this to his employer, or employer to employee, it can be the beginning of the search for a new job.

In his seminal book, *"The Five Dysfunctions of a Team,"* Patrick Lencioni has this at the top of the list. He says this, regarding the practices of trusting teams:

"Trusting teams:

- Admit weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion
- Take risks in offering feedback and assistance
- Appreciate and tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Focus time and energy on important issues, not politics
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation
- Look forward to meetings and other opportunities to work as a group"

Since building and keeping trust at all levels is so important, how do you actually do it? What are some practical and doable things that will result in strong bonds of trust?

John Maxwell mentioned in a post that there is a consulting firm in Philadelphia called Manchester, Inc. They did a survey of two hundred companies to discover ways for

leaders to build trust with employees. They discovered that people who excel at building trust do the following: I have added a few personal thoughts for each item.

Maintain integrity

(Be a person of your word, a person of character. Say what you mean, mean what you say and do what you say you would do.)

Openly communicate vision and values

(Things such as values, purpose, vision and strategy need to be repeated often and in myriad ways. People will forget the “why” behind the “what” over time. If the “why” and the “what” are not connected in their thinking and work, they will lose motivation and interest, with productivity and quality taking a downward turn.)

Show respect for employees as equal partners

(Simple things such as kindness, listening, empathy and genuine concern for others go a long way, as do phrases such as I am sorry, I take full responsibility and it was my fault. Lavish gratitude, appreciation, “Atta boys”, when it is appropriate, on the people you work with and who work for you, whether employee or volunteer. I have never met anyone who complained they were encouraged too much. Respect their time, their need for a degree of freedom and autonomy in their work. Respect their ideas and opinions, even if you don’t agree with them.)

Focus on shared goals rather than personal agendas

(Pushing personal agendas over group focus and goals will kill trust and engender ill feelings, suspicion and even anger which puts a nail in the heart of trust.)

Listen with an open mind

(A secure person will accept a new idea and concept because it is helpful or better rather than reject it because it is different. Get used to thinking it is different, not necessarily wrong. We need to move away from the not-invented-here malady. Don’t get into the attitude of my mind is made up so don’t confuse me with facts. An open mouth is often a sign of a closed mind. Listen well and honestly, consider new and different approaches and ideas.)