The Anatomy of High Trust Relationships

Hank R. Smith, PhD
May 20, 1916
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“One friend, one person who is truly understanding, who takes the trouble to listen to us as we consider our problems, can change our whole outlook.”

Elton Mayo
(1880-1949)
Trust is like the air we breathe. When it’s present, nobody really notices. But when it’s absent, everybody notices.

Warren Buffet
TRUST

- Turnover
- Job Satisfaction
- Productivity Rates
- Politics/Gossip
- Communication
- Innovation
Without trust there is no risk-taking and without risk-taking there is no innovation. If you want to get more people to take the necessary risk to innovate, just put more trust in the room.

No low trust organization will ever produce sustained innovation.
Trust

Student Achievement
Propensity to Trust

- Personality
- Experience in specific relationship
- Emotion/Mood Current Circumstances
- Childhood
- Experiences with those they deem to be like you

Propensity to Trust
The Boys in the Boat
Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics
Daniel James Brown
Building Trust in a Low Trust Relationship:

**1 on 1 & Group Interaction**
- Frequent
- Personal
- Positive
- Low-risk
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Why High Trust Relationships?

High-risk activities:
Critical feedback
Innovation
Seek help
Productivity
“If we don’t trust one another, then we aren’t going to engage in open, constructive, ideological conflict. And we’ll just continue to preserve a sense of artificial harmony.”

(Dysfunctions, 91)
Low Trust

- Conceal weaknesses and mistakes / Blame others and use excuses
- Hesitate to ask for help
- Hesitate to offer help
- Jump to conclusions
- Demand greater job protection
- Get involved in office politics
- Hold grudges
- Dread meetings and find ways to avoid them
- View change with suspicion
- Have a low commitment to goals
- Seem fearful, emotional distant, and/or stressed
Low Trust
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High Trust
• Own up to their mistakes
• Aren’t afraid to ask for help
• Help one another easily
• Give others the benefit of the doubt
• Feel free to deviate from normal operations if needed
• Appreciate one another / Offer and accept apologies
• Meetings are fun / time spent on real issues
• Excited for change
• Want the organization to succeed
• Enjoy coming to work
Low Trust → High Trust

C.O.R.E.
Compassion
Openness
Reliability
Expertise
C.O.R.E.

Compassion
Openness
Reliability
Expertise
Formal Authority
vs.
Moral Authority
“The best leaders are those whom people want to follow. We have a different word for people whom others follow only because of force or need. We call them tyrants.”

(The Anatomy of Peace, 159)
“I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among my people the greatest asset I possess, and the way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement.

There is nothing else that so kills the ambitions of a person as criticisms from superiors.”

- Charles M. Schwab
THE GIFT OF LISTENING

Compassionate
Active
Discriminative
Content
Casual
Passive
Selective
False

THE GIFT OF LISTENING

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Low Trust → High Trust

C.O.R.E.

Compassion
Openness
Reliability
Expertise
High-performing nurses’ units reported higher rates of mistakes.
After watching dozens of couples, the two scholars predicted relationship outcomes and tracked their research subjects’ relationships for the next ten years. Sure enough, they had predicted nearly 90% of the divorces that occurred. Over time, couples who found a way to state their opinions about high-stakes, controversial, and emotional issues honestly and respectfully remained together.

(Conversations, 13)
C.O.R.E.
- Compassion
- Openness
- Reliability
- Expertise
Yellowstone

National Park
Wyoming, Montana, Idaho
WORDS ↔ ACTIONS
“Our principal rarely gets into classrooms to observe or give feedback. But when we had our accreditation visit, right in front of the whole team our principal said that he gets into every classroom at least once a year, if not more. He said that most were informal, drop-in visits. We all knew that it wasn’t true. We couldn’t believe that he would come right out and lie like that! After that, I never trusted him in the same way again.”
“We really miss our old principal. When you would ask him something, he would say, “Let me think about it and I’ll get back to you.” And he always would. He was just very thoughtful and deliberative in his decisions. Our new principal will make decisions right on the spot. But then when she gets more information or somebody complains, she changes it. We never know what the final decision is or when it might change. It leaves everybody guessing.”
C.O.R.E.
Compassion
Openness
Reliability
Expertise
"Life is hard; it's harder if you're stupid."

John Wayne
May 20, 1916
“I thanked the men for their steadiness and good morale they have shown in these trying circumstances,” Shackleton later wrote, “and I told them I had no doubt that, provided they continued to work their utmost and to trust me, we will all reach safety in the end.”
One crewman wrote: “The job was now up to us. We were in a mess, and the Boss was the man who could get us out.”
Shackleton’s passion for his mission and for his men, his passion for leadership, and his passion for motivation were a source of energy and courage during times of severe adversity. These virtues made him a leader that people wanted to follow. Even when his men may not have wanted to do something for themselves, they would do it for him.

He inspired this kind of loyalty because he gave it to his men. They respected and trusted him because he respected and trusted them. They took care of him because he took care of them. They put him first because he put them first.
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