

## **Building Higher Trust 28 The Will to Rebuild Trust**

**by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



When faced with a trust betrayal, you need to do some serious soul searching. In many cases, it is possible to repair the damaged trust so that it comes back even stronger than it was before the betrayal. In other situations, it may be impossible to repair trust, and you have to cut your losses.

In this brief article I will highlight a few things to do and also some things to avoid.

### **Don't Procrastinate**

You may feel reluctant to sit down for a serious conversation with someone who has violated a trust. You may be tempted to let time heal the wound. That is a bad strategy, because the situation usually gets worse with time unless you have a significant intervention.

I liken it to a dead fish. The stink is only going to get worse with time. Seek first to understand what really happened. Approach the other person in a mature way and calmly state that you are feeling uncomfortable about something that has happened between the two of you. State that you value the relationship and wish to understand what really happened.

### **Misunderstanding**

The conversation focusing on what actually occurred is the best first step. The reason is that often what you think happened is not what really occurred, or there may be extenuating circumstances that you missed.

If it turns out that your interpretation of what happened was correct, then calmly try to uncover why the other person let you down. The purpose at this point is not to find blame, but to build enough knowledge that you can brainstorm what kinds or remedial actions would help heal the wound. Make sure your body language sends that message.

### **Avoid Anger**

Getting into a shouting match over what occurred is not going to serve the relationship well. Remain calm and put your energy into fully hearing the other person's description. You may be anxious to talk about the end result of the betrayal while the other person is still trying to describe what caused the action to occur.

## Listen

Put on your “listening hat” and focus on the message that is in the words, inflection, and body language. If you are getting inconsistent signals from the words and the body language, dig into why the other person is being ambiguous. Do this in a kind way with the intent to understand the person fully rather than an accusatory way trying to trip up the other person.

Managing the conversation when there has been a trust betrayal is extremely important because in most cases you can repair the damage and regain the trust that was lost by the betrayal.

## Bonus video

Here is a [brief video on The Will to Rebuild Trust](#)

*Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.*

