

## Building Higher Trust 73 Self-Trust

by **Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



A colleague mentioned that self-trust is an extremely important concept in life.

In all my years of studying trust, I had not spent much time dealing with self-trust. This article is an attempt to remedy that.

### **We all Rationalize**

Self-trust is kind of a spooky business. We tend to rationalize the things we do

that may be marginal. If we do something that we know deep down is just wrong, we rationalize. We think about the reasons that drove us to do that and give ourselves a pass on the transaction. I began to realize how hard it really is to determine one's level of self-trust.

Ask yourself right now if you can trust yourself. It should give you a chill to wrestle with your level of integrity when nobody can know your thoughts. We all have habits or weaknesses that are not particularly good for us. For example, I do not purchase large containers of ice cream. Can you guess why?

If you are a person with no temptations or secret things then you must be a saint. For the rest of us, recognize that your personal private integrity can never be 100%. You will do some things in your life out of convenience, habit, addiction, laziness, ignorance, or greed. How do you know where to draw the line? How do you know if you have full integrity?

### **Get Real**

My colleague suggested that we cannot help others to develop more trust until we know we can trust ourselves. I believe that is true, but only with a caveat of degree. I cannot

say that in every instance in my life I have done what I know to be right. Still, I do see myself as basically worthy of my own trust. How do I rationalize the dichotomy?

### **Example of a Learning Experience**

As you wrestle with this conundrum, be conscious of the decisions you have made that you regret. For example, I once was given the wrong change by a cashier. I kept the extra money and felt really rotten about it for a day or two. Reason: my self-image had been tarnished by my actions.

I overcame the sin by learning from my mistake. I vowed to never be guilty of that kind of thing again. Now, I point it out if there is an error in my favor. It has cost me a little bit in terms of cash, but I gained an immense amount of self-trust.

I love the look of surprise when I inform the cashier. "Oops, you only charged me for one, but there are really two there. They were nested together." Yes, I had to pay the extra \$11; my self-esteem gained much more than that.

### **Learn and Grow**

We can learn to take a personal transgression as a signal to learn. We resolve to become a different type of person on that dimension. We triumph over the issue and become more robust in our own integrity. That does not mean we will be perfect from that point on. It does mean we are really trying to be true to ourselves.

I believe self-trust is important. It is part of a healthy individual to believe in him or herself and know there is integrity. Work on your self-talk in this way. You will grow in your ability to live the life you want to live.

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