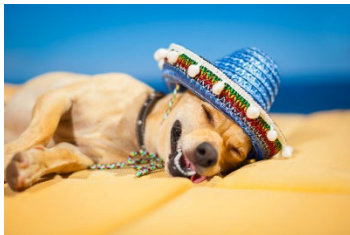


Building Higher Trust 99 Trust and Your Dog

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



You may have heard a version of this point sometime before about your dog. I trust my dog to not make a mess on the rug, but I would not walk out of the kitchen and leave a hamburger on the table. This simple dichotomy demonstrates an important point about trust.

Trust is never absolute

Regardless of the relationship, there are always limits to the trust we have in other people or things. We don't think much about extreme conditions, because we rarely operate in the danger zone. For example, I do not trust a string to support my body as it dangles off the Empire State Building. The stakes are too high, and the string looks kind of feeble to me.

There is a zone of conditions where we feel it is safe to trust. Outside that zone, trust becomes chancy. If you don't believe me, think of any person or thing that you have the utmost trust in. Now let your mind wander to the edges of conditions that never occur in real life. If they did happen, then you would be unable to trust under those circumstances.

What is an acceptable zone for your dog?

You can train a dog to do lots of things, and the dog will obey *almost* always. If you get into a zone where instinct takes over, no amount of training is going to make the dog robust. The dog is going to do what a dog does.

Let's take another example and test it out. I trust in the force of gravity. It has been my experience all my life. I understand that if I drop something it will go down and smash on the floor. There is no doubt in my mind unless you put me in a spaceship. Then all of a sudden the rules have to change.

Be alert for when you are reaching the limit

In an organization, we trust people all the time. We know they understand the rules and abide by them faithfully. The boss trusts Linda to be at work on time at 8 a.m. every day. She is a dedicated worker who has an impeccable track record. But if Linda woke up this morning with a temperature of 107 degrees, you cannot trust her to get to work on time. There is no mystery here. She is as incapable of getting to work as if she had an accident on the highway.

Conclusion

We always need to think about the potential exceptional things that can cause someone to violate a trust. Trust is not absolute under all conditions.

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