

## Building Higher Trust 103 First Law of Trust

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Years ago I coined a phrase “The First Law of Trust.” I derived my First Law of Trust after studying trust for decades. It states, “if you want to see more trust, you must extend more trust.” The basis of the rule is that trust is always reciprocal.

The First Law of Thermodynamics gave me the idea. We learned it in college, but I had to look it up today.

The law states that **energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be converted from one form to another.** It appears that the Second Law of Thermodynamics is **your memory ain’t what it once was!**

### The reciprocal nature of trust

Trust always works in both directions. When we show more trust in others we begin to see more trust extended back to us. It is why I never dropped my young daughter when twirling her around. She was trusting me with her life, and I responded by hanging onto her.

This simple truth is why I cringe when I see some employers violating the law. They want people who work for them to trust them. Then they put tracking mechanisms on remote workers to measure their output. Not only is the practice illogical, it violates the first law of trust.

I believe this kind of management is why we have the phenomenon of “quiet quitting.” That behavior is doing the bare minimum of work in order to stay out of trouble. The practice leaves working up to one’s potential on the scrap heap. Many people are insulted by the mechanisms to keep track of their activities.

### Stephen M.R. Covey’s new book

In his new book [Trust and Inspire](#), Stephen M.R. Covey shares three competencies to become a “Trust and Inspire” Leader.

The first competency is **Modeling**, which is about who you are. Modeling is how you show up for the world. You cannot expect others to behave with excellent values if you are not doing so yourself.

The second competency is **Trusting**, which is about how you lead. Outstanding leaders understand that to see more trust, they need to extend more trust to others. That philosophy is exactly my First Law of Trust.

The third competency is **Inspiring**, which is about how you connect to “why.” To inspire others, they need to understand the purpose of why we do things. Stephen points out that “people don’t leave organizations, they leave bad bosses.”

The entire book is about how great leaders bring out the greatness that is inside of individuals. I recommend this book for all leaders.

### **Test yourself**

If you are a leader, ask yourself how satisfied you are with the trust within your organization. If it could be better, ask yourself how you can show more trust in your people. Ask how you can help them trust each other. Following this formula religiously will produce dramatic results over time.

### **Conclusion**

The first law of trust is operating all day every day. It is as sure as the law of gravity is on earth. Recognize that your leadership actions have everything to do with how much trust exists in your group.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations