

Building Higher Trust 123 Extend More Trust

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



The best way to build more trust is to extend more trust. At first, it sounds like a poor strategy because not everyone is worthy of your trust. If someone is acting in a non-trustworthy manner, wouldn't it backfire to extend more trust? The answer is usually no.

There are situations where it is just not smart to extend trust. In most cases, it is a good strategy simply because trust is reciprocal. To see more trust with another person, you should extend more trust.

Example of where it would not be wise to extend more trust

This concept should not be taken literally in every case. Suppose your brother has a severe drinking problem and wants to borrow your car to go to a party. Handing him the keys as a show of trust would be a dangerous strategy. That would not prevent you from showing him more trust in other ways.

Real-life examples are not that extreme

Trusting another person to take your precious dog for a walk would seem like not that much of a risk. It is all a matter of judgment, but if you take the risk, you will likely be heading in the right direction. This analysis is true in nearly all situations.

Video of a real situation

Here is a link to a 3-minute video on this topic. It contains a real story about when I suggested to a leader that he show more trust in his people. The video is entitled [Find a Way to Extend More Trust](#).

Many leaders fall into the trap of demanding their employees show 100% trustworthiness before they will trust them. That strategy is one reason why so many organizations struggle. They are afraid of losing control so they withhold trust, and it works against the culture of the organization.

Logic as given by Stephen M.R. Covey

In his new book ***Trust and Inspire***, Stephen M.R. Covey makes a recommendation along the lines of what I am suggesting here. He points out that when we trust people to do the right thing, we unleash the greatness inside them. The old “command and control” approach to leadership does not work in our world anymore.

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