

## **Trust is a Mirror**

**by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



Here is an interesting observation where trust can act like a mirror. Other people know how you are coming across to them. You are aware how other people are striking you. The reverse is not always evident.

You can guess how your actions and words are being received as you listen and observe body language.

Recognize that your guess may not always be accurate. Would it be valuable to have a way to see more clearly how others see you? I think that would be incredibly valuable.

### **Why Trust is a Mirror**

I believe there is a kind of “mirror” that can allow you to see yourself as others do. When you develop a relationship of high trust with another person, you create a mirror. You can know how you are coming across at any point in time with greater accuracy.

With trust, the other person will likely feel more comfortable expressing their feelings. They will often tell you when you are coming on too strong. It may be that you are being too pedantic, uncommitted, or duplicitous.

Why does trust enable this kind of feedback that is so powerful? Trust allows other people to feel safe telling you what they are thinking, without fear. In less trusting relationships, people are more guarded.

When trust is low, giving direct feedback often leads to unintended consequences, and that means damage control. Trust allows people to give you feedback with respect that prevents the need to shelter from your reaction.

## **Trust and Fear are Opposites**

I believe that trust and fear are incompatible. When you remove the fear between people, trust will grow spontaneously. My favorite quote on this phenomenon is, "The absence of fear is the incubator of trust." Once trust is established, you have a greater chance of knowing how you are coming across to other people.

We are all a work in progress. Nobody is perfect as we exist today. In fact, a major part of life is learning and growing. I have always believed that when you stop growing, it is time to order a pine box.

## **Building Higher Trust**

The obvious question is, "How do I go about building relationships of higher trust?" The answer is as simple as the question. You build trust by creating a safe environment for the person who would share information with you.

Part of the equation is to care enough for the other person to pick up on small cues in their body language. You must be sensitive enough to see the signals. Your past reactions have convinced the other person it is safe to share things that are difficult to say. Trust between you and the other person will kindle.

The analysis may sound like circular reasoning, but it has the simplicity and validity of universal laws. When you take a baseball and drop it out of a window, the result is without question due to a law we call gravity. Trust is the same way.

Create an environment where people feel safe sharing difficult messages with you, then you develop trust. That trust means you often have the ability to see yourself the way other people do. This knowledge will allow you to take corrective or preventive actions that you would otherwise not even consider.

## **Conclusion**

Recognize the phenomenon is not absolute. Some people may still choose to hide their private thoughts. There is a higher probability of openness if trust exists.

An additional benefit is obvious. By creating a "real" environment with other people, you can tell them things that will help them grow. That reciprocal relationship is the basis on which two people can help each other on the journey of life.

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