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Trust Works!

Four Keys to Building
Lasting Relationships

Part I

A Tale of Trust

Broken Trust

Once upon a time in the country home of Mr. and Mrs. Berryhill, there lived a cat named Whiskers and a dog named Woof. The two did not get along.

They had their reasons.

Woof's goofy personality and sloppy personal hygiene annoyed the cat.

Whiskers's snooty attitude and finicky habits alienated the dog.

Some time ago Woof got so excited he chased Whiskers up a tree. She'd never forgiven him.

A couple of times Whiskers's sharp little claws had come out. Ever since, Woof had avoided her.

Plus, it was common knowledge that cats and dogs did not get along. Both Whiskers and Woof had heard from their mothers and fathers all the horror stories of the generations-old enmity between cats and dogs.

One day Woof made the terrible mistake of accidentally stepping on Whiskers's tail. Whiskers lashed out, swiping the dog across the face. Stinging with pain, Woof snarled and snapped at the cat, who leaped toward the dining room table to escape. She didn't quite make it. Her claws sank into the tablecloth, and as she fell back, she pulled the entire table full of dishes—just set for dinner—onto the floor, where they broke with a loud crash.

That's when Mrs. Berryhill came running into the room, her toddler in her arms.

"Oh, no. What a mess!" she cried.

The toddler, Billy, began to wail—a horrible, earsplitting sound.

Next, seven-year-old Kylie dashed in. "What happened?" she cried.

Finally, Mr. Berryhill burst into the room, his face red with anger.

"That's it!" he yelled as Woof and Whiskers scurried out of the room. "If you two don't learn to get along, I'm going to get rid of you. *All of you!*"

When Mr. Berryhill said "*all of you*" he was referring to the three other animals that lived in the house: a parrot named Presley, a hamster named Harriet, and a goldfish named Wiggles. Mr. Berryhill's voice boomed, so every animal in the house heard him loud and clear. It was also evident from Mr. Berryhill's tone that this was no idle threat. He'd been annoyed by the chaos created by Woof and Whiskers for quite some time. Mr. Berryhill seemed to have reached his breaking point.

Kylie's eyes filled with tears. "No, Daddy! Please don't get rid of our animals!"

Mr. Berryhill squatted down and looked his little girl in the eye. "I don't want to get rid of them, honey, but we have to trust these animals to behave if they're going to live in our house. If they're going to fight and break our dishes, they've got to go."

"But, Daddy—" Kylie began.

"Daddy's right," said Mrs. Berryhill. "If the animals are going to be part of our family, we have to be able to depend on them."

"If they behave, can we keep them?" Kylie asked tearfully.

"Yes, but only if they stop fighting," said Mr. Berryhill.

The parrot, who was old and wise, gravely shook his head. To human ears, Presley merely began squawking. But to every animal in the house, his announcement was clear:

"All animals, meet in the living room tonight at the stroke of midnight. Your presence is mandatory. This is an emergency!"

That night as they were getting ready for bed, Mrs. Berryhill had a heart-to-heart with her husband.

"Honey, the dog and cat did make an unfortunate mess tonight. But your reaction seemed a little over the top. Is there something going on that I should know about?"

Mr. Berryhill sat down with a sigh. "Things aren't going as well at work as I had hoped. I had a meeting with my boss today and he said he wasn't sure if I was in the right position."

"What did he mean by that?"

"He said he was disappointed that I didn't seem to have the skills to get things done on my own. Said he didn't have time to do his job and mine."

"That must have really bothered you," Mrs. Berryhill said.

"No kidding," he replied. "My position has a lot of new responsibilities, and I've been working my tail off. It annoys me that he expects me to be up to speed overnight. I wish he'd spend a little time helping me identify people who can coach me if he doesn't have the time."

"Can you talk to him about that?" asked Mrs. Berryhill.

Mr. Berryhill shook his head. "It won't be easy. He says his door is always open, but to get a meeting with him is a major project in itself."

"Sounds like you and your boss have trust issues. Just like we have with our cat and dog," she added with a smile.

"Yeah, stress at work, chaos at home. I'm between a rock and a hard place!" he said with a laugh. "Thanks for listening, honey. I certainly need this weekend to decompress."

A Matter of Perception

That night the animals gathered at midnight as planned. Sitting high on his perch, Presley began the proceedings.

"The status quo cannot continue," the parrot said. "There must be peace and harmony among all of us, or there will be great sorrow for each of us."

The animals were silent. They knew that Presley spoke the truth.

"First," said the parrot, "the two of you"—here he looked at the dog and cat—"must learn to get along."

"Impossible," said Whiskers, licking her paws. "Woof simply cannot be trusted. He nearly bit my head off today!"

"You nearly clawed my eyes out today!" Woof protested.

"After you crushed my tail!" Whiskers yowled.

"I didn't mean to!" Woof cried, jumping to his feet.

Whiskers arched her back and hissed loudly.

"STOP!" squawked the parrot. "Keep it down, or we'll all be thrown out!"

"You see?" said Whiskers. "Dogs cannot be trusted. Everyone knows that. There's no point in further discussion." With that she turned and left the room.

Woof sank onto the carpet and put his head on his paws.

"I didn't mean to upset Whiskers," the dog said. "I never do. It's all a misunderstanding, I swear."

Harriet the hamster, who had been silently running on her wheel, spoke up.

"Misunderstanding or not, we're all going to get kicked out of here if you two can't get along."

Woof looked to the parrot. "How can I get along with Whiskers when she won't even try to trust me?" he implored.

The parrot closed his eyes, going deep within for the answer. When at last he opened his eyes again, he said:

"Trust is a matter of perception."

"What do you mean?" asked Woof.

"I mean that what looks like perfectly acceptable behavior to you makes Whiskers wary—and vice versa. For example, Woof, when you think about the word *trust*, who or what comes to mind?"

The dog thought for a moment.

"I think about Kylie, because she puts food in my bowl every evening."

The parrot turned to the hamster. "Do you associate Kylie with trustworthiness?" he asked.

"Heavens, no!" said Harriet. "The last time Kylie played with me she tried to put me in doll's clothing! I associate trust with Mrs. Berryhill, who fills my water and cleans my cage when Kylie forgets to."

"So you see," said the parrot to the dog, "trust means different things to different people. If you and Whiskers are going to get along, you're going to have to find out how to earn each other's trust."

"What do you think I can say to earn Whiskers's trust?" Woof asked.

The parrot pondered the dog's question for a moment.

"Once you've lost someone's trust, it takes time to earn it back," said the parrot. "You must demonstrate you are trustworthy not only through your words but also through your actions."

"What kind of actions?" asked the dog.

"Actions that show you've mastered the ABCDs of trust," said the parrot.

"ABCDs?" said Wiggles, who until now had been swimming silently in his bowl. "That's certainly a mouthful."

"It is," said the parrot. "But trust can't be defined easily with a simple phrase. And it isn't something you can earn overnight. You'll have to begin at the beginning and go from there."

"Okay," said the dog, "where do I begin?"

"First, you must show Whiskers that you are **Able**," the parrot replied.

"What do you mean by **Able**?" asked the dog.

"That means showing Whiskers you have the know-how to help her," said the parrot. "If she has a problem, help her solve it! If she wants results, deliver them. If you are **Able**, step up and contribute. Show her you're worthy!"

**When you demonstrate competence and skills, you
are ABLE, which builds trust.**

38 Highlighters

Below are some statements about your **ability**. Think about your behaviors in a specific role—at home as a parent, spouse, sibling, roommate, or friend; at work as a manager or individual contributor; or in the community as a leader or volunteer. In this role, how often do you behave in each of the listed ways? Circle one response that best describes your behavior.

H—Hardly ever
S—Sometimes
O—Often
V—Very often
A—Always

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Get quality results | H S O V A |
| 2. Solve problems | H S O V A |
| 3. Am highly skilled | H S O V A |
| 4. Am good at what I do | H S O V A |
| 5. Have relevant experience | H S O V A |
| 6. Use my skills to assist others | H S O V A |
| 7. Strive to be the best at what I do | H S O V A |

Ready and Able

The next day was a midsummer scorch. After lunch, the humans gathered in the backyard. Mr. and Mrs. Berryhill sat with Billy in the shade while Kylie splashed in the pool.

“Can Billy come in the water and play with me?” Kylie asked.

“No, Kylie,” said Mrs. Berryhill. “I know you mean well, but I can’t really trust our little toddler playing with you in the water until he is **Able** to swim.”

“When’s that going to be?” asked Kylie.

“We’ll get him into a swimming class soon,” said her mom.

Kylie frowned. “You said that last week,” she said under her breath.

As they talked, none of the humans noticed the cat, who was walking along the fence searching for an exit. Woof saw this as a perfect opportunity to win Whiskers’s trust by showing her that he was **Able** to help her solve problems. He approached the cat, keeping a respectful distance.

“Whiskers,” he said, “I noticed that you have been trying to find a way through the backyard

fence for a long time."

"Yes," said the cat. "Unless I want to walk all the way around the house and out the front yard, I have to climb the backyard fence and jump over."

"I am going to make it easier for you to come and go," said Woof.

The cat looked at the dog, blinked, and then opened her mouth wide in a big yawn.

"Uh-huh. Right. Sure you will," she said. She had heard Woof boast like this before.

"I can tell you don't have confidence in me," said the dog.

"You're right," said Whiskers. "I don't."

"That's okay," said Woof. "I'm going to do this whether you think I'm **Able** or not."

And help her he did. Later that day he went out to the fence and began digging. Soon there was a perfect little cat-sized hole for the cat to crawl through. When he finished the hole to his satisfaction, Woof searched out Whiskers, who was taking her afternoon nap.

"Excuse me. I hate to wake you, but I think you'll be excited to see the new exit I made for you under the backyard fence," said Woof.

The cat lifted her head, looked across the yard, and said, "Well, what do you know, you dug a hole. Good for you." Then she promptly went back to sleep.

But Woof was not about to give up so easily. He might have been a dog, but even he knew that anyone can do something once and not necessarily be competent. He would have to impress her again.

"Excuse me," he said to the cat. "I hate to wake you once more, but I get the feeling you're not terribly impressed."

"Bingo," said Whiskers. "If you want to impress me, bring me some catnip."

The next day Woof searched the surrounding property and found a patch of fresh catnip growing in a sunny spot among some rocks. He gathered a leafy bunch in his mouth and dropped it at Whiskers's feet.

"Very nice," said the cat, sniffing the catnip with curiosity.

"So now are you impressed with my ability?" Woof asked hopefully.

"Not yet," replied the cat. "After all, it could be beginner's luck. If you really want to impress me with your competence, bring me a fish."

"I know I haven't been very helpful to you in the past," said the dog, "and it's going to take a while before you trust my skills. Getting you a fish won't be easy, but I'm certainly going to give it my best effort."

On Monday when Mr. and Mrs. Berryhill got home from their busy days, they sat down together over a couple of iced teas.

"How was your day at the office?" Mr. Berryhill asked his wife.

"Busy. I was nearly late picking up the kids from day care," she replied. "How did it go today with your boss?"

"I did a lot of thinking about my situation over the weekend," Mr. Berryhill said as he stirred his tea. "I decided that no matter how difficult it was, I was determined to get an appointment to see him today."

"Did you have any luck?" Mrs. Berryhill asked.

"I sure did—right after lunch," he replied.

"How'd that go?" she asked.

"My mother always said when you're having a challenging conversation with someone, it's

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"I sure did—right after lunch," he replied.

"How'd that go?" she asked.

"My mother always said when you're having a challenging conversation with someone, it's

always best to make a lot of 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements, because nobody can argue with your feelings. So I told him, 'I want to thank you for your feedback last week. I also want to apologize for letting you down. I realized I'm taking on some new responsibilities that are stretching my skills. I know how busy you are, so is there anyone you can recommend in the company who could mentor me for a while? I'm excited about the opportunity and want to be **Able** to develop the skills required to be excellent at my job."

"Wow," said Mrs. Berryhill, "I'm impressed. You were really vulnerable. How did he respond?"

"I was amazed," said Mr. Berryhill. "He thanked me for my honesty and suggested two people who might be able to help. He got right on the phone and left both of them messages. He suggested we talk in a couple of weeks to check my progress. He said he trusted that the next couple of weeks would be good learning opportunities for me."

"That's terrific," said Mrs. Berryhill.

Mr. Berryhill smiled at his wife. "Your digging for what was bothering me really helped me think it through. Thanks."

It took a week, but after a steep learning curve and a great deal of effort, the dog snatched a small fish from a nearby pond and plopped it at the cat's feet.

"This smells delicious," said Whiskers, poking her nose toward the fish. "I must say, I'm beginning to be impressed."

But Woof didn't stop there. He surprised her the following day with a rubber ducky he'd plucked from the swimming pool. Later that week he brought her a mouse toy he found near the trash cans.

Finally, Whiskers said, "Thank you. I do appreciate the passageway in the fence and all the gifts you've been bringing me."

Woof was pleased and very hopeful. "Does this mean you finally think I'm **Able** to help you?"

"I suppose it does," said the cat.

"Now will you trust me?" asked the dog.

"Trust you? No. It's all well and good that you can dig holes and hunt for cat treasures. But just because you're able to do these things doesn't mean I can trust you. There are other issues."

"Other issues? Like what?" asked Woof.

The cat sighed and shook her sleek little head. "I don't have time to get into that. Look, cats and dogs just don't get along. It's common knowledge."

With that, she put her tail in the air and walked away, making clear that the conversation was over.

Believe It or Not

Disappointed that Whiskers didn't yet trust him, Woof sought out Presley the parrot.

"For weeks now I've been doing my best to show the cat that I'm **Able** to help her," Woof said.

"Yes, so I've heard," said Presley. "Rumor has it you've done well, so why the long face?"

Hanging his head, Woof said, "Whiskers still doesn't trust me. She says there are 'other issues.'"

The parrot nodded thoughtfully. "Don't be so discouraged, Woof," he said. "You're not going to win Whiskers's trust—and vice versa—in the blink of an eye. Building trust takes time."

"But surely there's more I can do to show Whiskers I'm trustworthy," said the dog.

"There certainly is," said the parrot. "Now that you've demonstrated you are **Able**, you must show Whiskers you are **Believable**."

"How do I do that?" Woof asked.

"You must act with integrity," said the parrot. "That means that if Whiskers tells you something in confidence, you'll keep it to yourself and not bark it all over town."

Woof was taken aback. Come to think of it, he had barked about a few of the cat's confidences over the years.

"Furthermore," said the parrot, "when you do something wrong, you must admit to it and apologize for it."

"I can do that," said Woof.

"But if you want to be **Believable**, the most important thing is to stay honest. That means no exaggerating—or minimizing—the truth."

Woof nodded, realizing that he had been known to stretch the truth a bit.

Building trust takes time.

"Being honest means that if you give Whiskers your word, you have to follow through on it so she knows that the words coming from your mouth will match your behavior."

"Is there anything else I need to know about being **Believable**?" the dog asked.

"Actually, there are quite a few things you need to know," the parrot said. "When you're faced with a tough decision, be fair in your choices. Be sincere in word and deed. Avoid being judgmental. Show respect for others."

"It sounds like being **Believable** is a character issue," Woof said.

"That's right," said the parrot. "Being **Believable** isn't a simple trick you can learn, like fetching a stick. It requires looking inside at your motives."

So for the next several weeks Woof did some soul-searching. He realized that Whiskers would come to trust him only when she saw what a good dog he was, deep down. As he was searching his heart, he remembered the day he had chased Whiskers up the tree. At the time he claimed it was due to overexcitement, but now that he was being honest with himself, he admitted he'd gotten a perverse pleasure in seeing the cat be so afraid.

It was time to make amends.

**When you act with integrity, you are BELIEVABLE,
which builds trust.**

Below are some statements about your **believability**. Thinking about the same role you chose to analyze for the ABLE area of trust, how often do you behave in each of the listed ways? Circle one response that best describes your behavior.

H—Hardly ever
S—Sometimes
O—Often
V—Very often
A—Always

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Keep confidences | H S O V A |
| 2. Admit when I am wrong | H S O V A |
| 3. Am honest | H S O V A |
| 4. Avoid talking behind people's backs | H S O V A |
| 5. Am sincere | H S O V A |
| 6. Am nonjudgmental | H S O V A |
| 7. Show respect for others | H S O V A |

Just about the time the parrot was telling the dog how to be *Believable*, Kylie approached her mom, who was working at her desk.

"Mom, you keep saying you're going to get Billy some swimming lessons. But you haven't, and I don't think you're ever going to do it."

Mrs. Berryhill opened her mouth to begin an excuse, but when she saw the look in Kylie's eyes, she realized she was losing her daughter's trust. It was clear her daughter didn't see her as *Believable*.

"I'm sorry, honey," she said. "You're right. I haven't set up his swimming lessons yet. Let's go to the computer. You can help me find out where they're giving lessons in the neighborhood so I can sign Billy up."

"Yay!" said Kylie. "I can't wait for him to be able to play with me in the pool."

Within a few minutes, they had found a school and enrolled Billy in a class.

The next day Woof found Whiskers stretched out on the carpet, warming her silky fur in the sunshine pouring through the window.

"Whiskers," he said, "I would like to apologize to you."

She opened her eyes ever so slightly. "What have you done now?" she asked.

"Months ago I chased you up the big oak tree in the front yard," said the dog. "Not only was that disrespectful, but I frightened you and that was wrong. I sincerely apologize and promise you I won't do that again."

Whiskers lay back and closed her eyes again. "Apology accepted," she said. "Now let me sleep."

Harriet, who had been eavesdropping on their conversation and could hardly believe her ears, stopped running on her wheel. Could it be that Woof and Whiskers were finally learning to trust each other?

Not only did Woof apologize, but over the next few weeks, he demonstrated that he was *Believable* to Whiskers in many other ways. For example, when Harriet and Wiggles were complaining about the way the cat rubbed Mrs. Berryhill's leg and got all of her attention, the dog refused to chime in.

"Whiskers is conceited and self-centered," they said. "Don't you agree, Woof?"

To this Woof responded, "She is my friend. If you two have issues with Whiskers, you really should discuss them with her."

Word of Woof's gallant response got back to Whiskers and to her great surprise, she was touched.

On a windy afternoon when Woof was feeling frisky, he succumbed to his old ways and bounded toward Whiskers at full speed. He didn't do it on purpose; it was simply the force of deeply ingrained habit. Just in time he remembered his promise not to chase her. He stopped dead in his tracks, wagged his tail in a friendly, nonthreatening way, and waited politely for her to pass by. The change of behavior took considerable effort, and Woof felt proud of himself for achieving it.

As the cat passed by, she said, "A bit windy today, isn't it?"

To herself, Whiskers thought: *Woof's not such a bad fellow after all.*

The Connection

One night when all the animals were gathered in the living room, Whiskers made an announcement.

"As you all may have noticed, things have settled down a lot between Woof and me," the cat said. "We haven't had a major fight for weeks now, and even Mr. Berryhill seems to have forgotten his annoyance with us. Harriet, you said that we were all going to get kicked out of this house unless Woof could get along with me. I'm pleased to announce that the issue has been resolved."

Whiskers walked over to Woof and sat down before him. "What I'm saying is, I think I finally trust you," she said.

Presley, who had been watching all these developments without much comment, finally spoke up.

"Not so fast," the parrot said. "Trust is a two-way street. Before we can be certain that peace will reign in this household, we must find out if the feelings are mutual." Presley turned to the dog. "Woof, do you trust Whiskers? Be honest."

Woof looked at Whiskers for a long moment. Finally, he said, "Honestly? Not really. On far too many occasions I've seen those claws come out without warning. Sorry as I am to say it, I can't state that I'm certain it won't happen again."

Whiskers looked offended. "But we're friends now! Why don't you trust me?"

"It's hard to say," said Woof, "but if I had to try, what it really amounts to is that I don't *feel* I can trust you."

The cat nonchalantly licked her coat a few times. Although she didn't show it on the outside, inside her heart was heavy. Then she looked to the parrot.

"Presley, this silly dog doesn't trust me, even though I've proclaimed my friendship," she said. "How am I supposed to make this dumb dog see the truth?"

Trust is a two-way street.

With that slur, Woof growled under his breath, just loud enough for the hamster and goldfish to hear. Then he got up and left the room. He'd had enough of the cat's insults.

"Oh dear," said Wiggles. "I can see right now that if Whiskers can't win Woof's trust, the fighting is bound to start up again."

"And we'll all get kicked out of here," said Harriet in a worried tone.

"But I have no idea how to get through Woof's thick head," said the cat.

"You can start by speaking about him with a little more respect," said the parrot with a laugh.
"Woof says he doesn't feel he can trust you, right?"

"So he says," the cat replied.

"Your job, then, is to show Woof that you're **Connected** to him," said the parrot. "You must demonstrate to him through your actions that you care about him. *Do you care about him?*"

Whiskers thought about all that Woof had done for her the past several weeks—the catnip, the kitty toys, the steadfast friendship.

"Yes," she said, "I do. I was just thinking recently that he's really not a bad fellow, especially for a dog."

"Then you must show him you care," said the parrot.

"But how?" asked Whiskers.

"For one thing, show a little empathy toward him. When he does something well, praise his efforts. Show interest in his life. Do you think you can do that?"

"I suppose so," said the cat.

"At the same time," continued the parrot, "communicate with Woof. Let him get to know you better by sharing information about yourself. Listen to his opinions and points of view with an open mind. Ask for his ideas and input."

Whiskers lifted a paw and licked between her claws. "That's quite a tall order for a cat, but I'll give it a try," she said.

Connecting with others wasn't the cat's strong suit. She knew she was going to have to work hard to change her behavior.

When you care about others, you are CONNECTED, which builds trust.

Below are some statements about your **connectedness**. Thinking about the same role you chose to analyze for the ABLE and BELIEVABLE areas of trust, how often do you behave in each of the listed ways? Circle one response that best describes your behavior.

H—Hardly ever
S—Sometimes
O—Often
V—Very often
A—Always

1. Listen well

H S O V A

2. Praise others' efforts	H S O V A
3. Show interest in others	H S O V A
4. Share about myself	H S O V A
5. Work well with others	H S O V A
6. Show empathy for others	H S O V A
7. Ask for input	H S O V A

"I had a great meeting with my boss today," chimed Mr. Berryhill as he helped Mrs. Berryhill set the table for dinner.

"Really? That's great," she replied. "After that first follow-up meeting you weren't so sure things were going to work out."

"That's true, but in the past month I've gotten tremendous help from the two people my boss referred me to. I was really excited about reporting that to him at today's meeting. But he beat me to the punch."

"How so?"

"He had already gotten glowing reports from those two colleagues and was very impressed with my progress. After a rocky start, I think we're really communicating well now. We even talked about the World Series. I didn't know he was a baseball nut and he didn't know that about me, either. It was fun."

"Sounds like you're beginning to feel **Connected** to each other," said Mrs. Berryhill.

"I think we are. He seems to appreciate the fact that I went out of my way to learn new skills and follow through on what I promised to do. And I appreciate his new interest in me as a human being."

One day as Woof was sitting on the back patio, Whiskers saw an opportunity to connect. She joined him and asked about his life. She was surprised to find out he'd been adopted from an animal shelter and didn't even know his mother and father. Then she shared about her own life as the youngest kitten in a litter of six. They talked about their favorite pastimes and foods. Although Whiskers did not share Woof's passion for digging holes, she listened with interest as he described the many treasures he'd unearthed. And though she frankly found his barking irritating, she praised how well he protected the home when strangers came to the door.

It wasn't long before Whiskers was no longer trying to be **Connected** to Woof; connecting with him came naturally. The same was true for Woof. He enjoyed sharing information with Whiskers. As they continued to keep the lines of communication open, they didn't have to hope and wish for a caring relationship—the bond between them was real.

It All Depends

"The two of you have come a long way," said Presley to the dog and the cat at their next council meeting. "You've made tremendous progress on your relationship."

The others nodded in agreement.

"Woof," continued the parrot, "you've not only stopped chasing Whiskers, you've done so consistently. I think we can all rely on you to continue that good behavior and stand up for her."

"Whiskers, you've not only stopped criticizing and clawing Woof, you've also reached out to get to know him. In fact, you've really brought out the best in him."

Harriet and Wiggles heartily concurred.

"The two of you getting along has created a much more harmonious atmosphere for the rest of us," said the hamster.

"Yeah," said the goldfish. "And Mr. Berryhill hasn't threatened to kick us out lately."

"These two have set a fine example for the rest of us," said the parrot. "Through their actions and words, they have shown us how being **Able**, **Believable**, and **Connected** builds trust. We've seen that by using these tools, even age-old enemies like cats and dogs can get along."

"Life is good now that we've learned the ABCs of trust," said Woof with a smile.

"But we're not out of the woods yet," said the parrot. "There's one more element of trust that remains to be explored. When we've mastered this, we'll truly be trustworthy."

Whiskers, ever curious, asked, "What is this final element of trust?"

Presley replied, "As you'll remember, Mrs. Berryhill told Kylie that if we were going to stay, the humans had to be able to depend on us. That means we need to commit to working together as a team. There must be trust not just between you and Woof, but among all of us, working together. We must create a climate of trust."

"How do we do that?" asked Harriet.

"In addition to behaving in ways that show we are **Able**, **Believable**, and **Connected**, we need to demonstrate that we are **Dependable**," replied the parrot, "both individually and as a team. If we can count on each other and be there for each other—and the humans—no matter what—that's when we'll know we have created a climate of trust. It's all about the way we behave."

"But how can a fish like me behave in a way that's **Dependable**?" asked Wiggles.

"It's not hard," replied the parrot. "For example, when somebody asks for help, respond on time and do what you say you will do."

"I can do that," said the goldfish.

"What about me?" asked Harriet. "How can I behave in a way that's **Dependable**?"

"Follow up," replied the parrot. "And be consistent—don't say one thing and do the other. Be organized—no more tossing your shavings outside your cage!"

"How might a feline be **Dependable**?" asked Whiskers.

"Be on time—no dawdling," said the parrot. "And hold yourself accountable rather than placing responsibility for mistakes on others."

"In other words, we all have to step up and pull our weight around here, right?" said Woof.

"Right," said Presley. "If we are dependable and work together, Mr. Berryhill and the rest of the family also will be able to depend on us."

**When you maintain reliability, you are DEPENDABLE,
which builds trust.**

Below are some statements about your **dependability**. Thinking about the same role

you chose to analyze for the ABLE, BELIEVABLE, and CONNECTED areas of trust, how often do you behave in each of the listed ways? Circle one response that best describes your behavior.

H—Hardly ever
S—Sometimes
O—Often
V—Very often
A—Always

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Do what I say I will do | H S O V A |
| 2. Am timely | H S O V A |
| 3. Am responsive to requests | H S O V A |
| 4. Am organized | H S O V A |
| 5. Am accountable for my actions | H S O V A |
| 6. Follow up | H S O V A |
| 7. Am consistent | H S O V A |

It was a beautiful summer evening. For several blessed weeks life had been nearly perfect. Peace and sunshine filled the house as Mr. Berryhill arrived home from work. When he walked through the door, he had exciting news.

"You won't believe what happened at work today," he said to Mrs. Berryhill. "My boss called me into his office."

"And?" she asked, raising her brows.

"First, he congratulated me on my excellent progress in my job."

"That's terrific," said Mrs. Berryhill.

"Then he told me about an opportunity that's just come up. There's a new position that he thinks will really build on my new skills as well as my natural strengths. He said he was considering another strong candidate for the job, but was offering it to me because he feels he can depend on me."

"That's great news!" said Mrs. Berryhill. "Boy, your relationship certainly has turned around."

"Yeah, trust works!" said Mr. Berryhill. "But there's a catch. The new position is in a city all the way across the country. We'd have to pack up and move by the end of the summer."

Mrs. Berryhill stood with her mouth slightly agape. "Wow, that is a catch. Is the opportunity worth it?"

"It really is, honey. I'd not only have more responsibility, but I'd also get a significant increase in pay. It's a tremendous, career-enhancing move. Are you up for it?"

"I need some time to mull this over," she said. "There's my work to think about and most important, the kids. Billy's too young to care, but the move might be a little hard on Kylie."

"I was thinking about that, especially since I don't think it makes sense to move all the animals to the city."

Mrs. Berryhill shook her head. "That's going to be a tough sell, honey," she said.

A Terrible Blow

The entire clan—Mr. and Mrs. Berryhill, Kylie, their toddler, and all the animals—was gathered in the living room after dinner that evening, enjoying the rhythmic music of crickets and the warm, sweet-scented air coming through the open windows.

Then Mr. Berryhill turned to his daughter and dropped the bomb.

"I just got an important promotion at work, Kylie. It's a new job with more responsibilities and a lot more money, so we can move into a nice new place. Plus, there will be museums and plays and all kinds of fun new things for you and Billy to do. Your mom and I have talked it over and we both agree it's a great idea."

"Yay!" said Kylie. "That sounds awesome!"

"The only problem," said Mr. Berryhill, "is that my new job is an awfully long way from here. In fact, it's all the way on the other side of the country." He reached for his iPad and brought up a map of the country. "We'll be moving all the way from here"—he pointed to their current town—"to here." He pointed to a city on the opposite side of the continent.

"Given how far we have to move, I think we're going to have to find homes for all these animals. We can't take them with us."

"But, Daddy!" Kylie cried. "The animals have been good! You promised if they were good they could stay. You can't give them away!"

Tears sprang to Kylie's eyes. Although she didn't have the words to describe it, she was questioning how **Dependable** her dad was.

"I know they've been good, but moving five animals three thousand miles is hard to do, and your dad and I already have enough work to do to make this move happen," said Mrs. Berryhill. "Besides, they probably wouldn't like the city. I promise we'll find them good homes where they can make another little girl or boy happy."

The animals sat in shocked silence. Despite all their best efforts, circumstances outside their control now threatened their peaceful lives.

That night Presley called another animal council.

"The news is terrible, it's true," the parrot said. "Just remember: no matter what happens, we're a team. That means we use all our abilities and integrity, and we stay connected to one another. Our very lives are depending on us being a team now. Right?"

"Right," all the animals said in unison.

"But how are we going to be a team when Mr. and Mrs. Berryhill are going to give us away?" the hamster said sadly.

"I don't know," said the parrot. "Let's just trust each other and take this one day at a time."

A Test of Trust

Around the house, moving boxes were half packed. A tearful Kylie was upstairs in her room, petting Whiskers and telling her how much she would miss her. Woof sat on the floor in the kitchen, listening to Mrs. Berryhill making phone calls to friends and animal shelters, looking for

new homes for him and his animal buddies.

Ten minutes earlier, Mrs. Berryhill had put Billy down for a nap. On every other day, the toddler had napped quietly for at least an hour. But on this day, he climbed out of his crib and wandered into the living room.

Harriet was the first to see him. Right away, she knew something wasn't right. She squeaked out a warning to Presley, but the parrot was dozing and didn't hear her. She squeaked out to Wiggles, too, but he was nibbling at the stones on the bottom of his tank and did not notice her. Hoping to get someone's attention, Harriet started running on her wheel, which needed oiling and squeaked very loudly.

Meanwhile, the toddler was headed for the back door.

Finally, the parrot was roused by the hamster's squeaking wheel.

"Presley!" cried Harriet. "Do something! The kid is heading out the back door!"

Presley—who had an extremely loud voice—squawked for the cat, who heard him all the way from Kylie's room and streaked down the stairs in seconds.

"What's the matter?" Whiskers asked the squawking parrot.

"Follow the toddler!" the parrot cried. "No dawdling!"

Whiskers raced from the room and caught sight of the toddler just as he was wandering out the back door. Knowing she was powerless to stop him, she ran to find her friend Woof.

The dog was sniffing around some trash cans down the road.

"Woof, come quickly!" called the cat. "The toddler is heading for the swimming pool!"

Woof raced to the backyard and arrived just as the toddler was approaching the pool. He barked like there was no tomorrow and even lunged at the child to keep him from the water's edge.

Where on earth were the humans?

Inside, Mrs. Berryhill was finishing up her phone call with the Humane Society.

"They're pretty good pets," she said. "Yes, they're house trained. No, no diseases. Noisy? Well, not too much—"

But the shrill screeching of the parrot and the ferocious barking of the dog belied her.

"Listen, I have to go now," said Mrs. Berryhill. "I'll call back."

Just then Mr. Berryhill came charging down the stairs.

"What on earth is all that racket?" he yelled.

Kylie was right behind him. "What's going on?" she cried.

Together they ran into the backyard. Mr. Berryhill got there first and screamed at the dog.

"Quiet! You're disturbing the neighbors!"

But Woof kept up his barking. That's when everyone saw that the dog's barking and lunging at their toddler was the only thing keeping him out of the pool.

Mrs. Berryhill ran to the pool's edge and swept her little one into her arms.

With a look of intense relief, Mr. Berryhill embraced his wife and child.

"Thank goodness we got here in time," he said.

"Thank goodness the parrot started squawking and the dog started barking," said Mrs. Berryhill, tears of relief standing in her eyes.

Mr. Berryhill and Kylie turned to the dog.

"Good boy!" they said, leaning down and patting Woof's shoulders. "Good, good boy!"

Moving On

With her arms around Woof's neck and Whiskers rubbing her ankles, Kylie looked up at her parents.

"Now can we keep the animals?" she asked. "You promised!"

Mrs. Berryhill turned to her husband. "Kylie's right. We made the point that we had to be able to depend on these animals," she said. "Based on what just happened, I think they've proven they are **Dependable**."

Mr. Berryhill, who held his toddler snugly in his arms, nodded.

"You're right," he said. Mr. Berryhill kneeled down to look his daughter in the eye.

"Kylie, I gave you my word that if we could depend on the cat and dog to stop fighting, the animals could stay. I want you to be able to trust what I say. The way the animals have behaved today certainly earned my trust. I think we can figure out a way to take them with us."

"All of them?" Kylie asked pleadingly.

Mr. and Mrs. Berryhill looked at each other and smiled.

"Sure, why not?" said Mr. Berryhill with a laugh. "Let's do it."

And so it came to pass that Mr. Berryhill, Mrs. Berryhill, Kylie, Billy, the dog, the cat, the parrot, the hamster, and the goldfish piled into an RV and traveled together to their new home in a city on the other side of the country, where trust reigned supreme and they lived—more or less—happily ever after.

THE END