

# A LITTLE TALK ABOUT TRUST

HOW TO BUILD IT & KEEP IT

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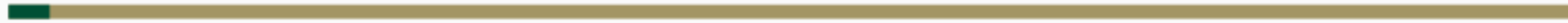
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Philosophical Series

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# INTRO



# SO WHAT IS TRUST ANYWAY?

## Distrust

A choice NOT TO MAKE YOURSELF VULNERABLE TO ANOTHER PERSON'S ACTIONS. It is a general assessment that; what is important to me is not safe with this person in this situation (or any situation).  
vulnerable to another person's actions.

# SO WHAT IS TRUST ANYWAY?

## TRUST

- Cooperating
- Collaborating
- Engaging in conversations
- Dialog and debate of ideas
- Listening
- Communicating freely
- Supporting others
- Sharing information
- Offering ideas
- Expecting the best
- Willingness to examine own actions

## DISTRUST

- Defending
- Direct attack
- Resisting
- Blaming
- Complaining
- Judging
- Avoiding / ignoring
- Withholding info/ideas
- Expecting the worst
- Justifying protective actions based on distrust

# SO WHAT IS TRUST ANYWAY?

## Trust

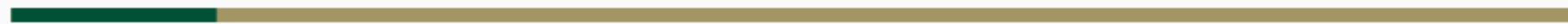
Choosing to risk making something you value **vulnerable** to another person's actions.

# ELEMENTS OF TRUST

## DIMENSIONS OF TRUST

1. SINCERITY
2. RELIABILITY
3. COMPETENCE
4. CARE

# SINCERITY





## Sincerity

Sincerity is the assessment that you are honest, that you say what you mean and mean what you say; you can be believed and taken seriously. It also means when you express an opinion it is valid, useful, and is backed up by sound thinking and evidence. Finally, it means that your actions will align with your words.

## Example I

“What I really appreciate about Tom is he doesn’t just talk about how things need to change and expect others to go do it. He makes it happen. When he started here two years ago he publicly declared to the entire company that he wanted this to be a place where everyone’s ideas would be heard, respected and considered. A lot of people were skeptical at first, me included. But he was sincere about it. He actually did what was needed to get us to buy in and make it happen. And it’s paid off. We’ve gotten lots of great ideas for saving money and improving processes, even new products, from people all over the company - manufacturing folks, customer service reps, a receptionist, and several middle managers.”

## Example II

“One of the things that makes Elaine believable is she doesn’t sugar-coat things. Her talk at the recent company-wide meeting was a breath of fresh air. She acknowledged that we are in trouble and actually named some of the specific problems. But she also gave us some good news I could believe. When she told us why she believes we can turn things around I found myself believing that too. I really got excited.”

## Example III

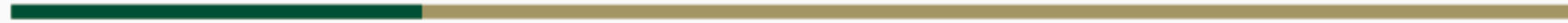
“The senior VP of sales and marketing says our division is critical to the overall success of the company, but he sure doesn’t act like we are. When we ask for something from corporate marketing or sales he talks like they’ll support what we’re doing, but then he turns around and pulls the rug out from under us. For example, this year we proposed a new incentive plan for the sales force that would have compensated them better for selling our division’s products without costing the company any more. When our GM and I talked to the VP about it, he said he would implement it. But at the last minute he revamped the comp plan and completely gutted the part that would have incented the sales force to sell our division’s products. His excuse was that it was impractical, but at this point I really don’t believe he ever meant to keep it in the plan.”

# SINCERITY

If you change your mind, as we all do from time to time, maintaining others' trust in your sincerity requires that you **let them know you are now committed to something different.**

Your sincerity can be questioned if you appear to say one thing to one person and something different to another, or if what you say isn't consistent over time. The key word here is APPEAR.

# RELIABILITY



## Reliability

Reliability is the assessment that you meet the commitments you make, that you keep your promises.

## Example I

“At the end of every team meeting we go around and make sure everyone knows what actions to take. The great thing about the people on this team is that they almost always do what they commit to. It’s really extraordinary, which is a sad thing to say because it should be ordinary.”



## Example II

“One of the things I can trust about Cindy is that when she makes a commitment you can be sure she’ll follow through. And if she can’t because something unexpected comes up, she’ll let you know as soon as she knows.”

## Example III

“I used to believe Kelly when she said she’d help me out with this or that. But after being burned a few times I don’t trust her at all anymore.”

# RELIABILITY

Unclear or incomplete requests, offers and commitments are often the source of unintended breaches of trust (reliability).

You make commitments in two ways: in response to someone else's request (or, if they are higher up in the organization, it might be direction or command); or by making an offer to someone. When the other person accepts your offer they usually consider it a commitment on your part.

Ideally when someone makes a request or gives you direction they include all the information you need to determine whether you can commit to fulfilling it or not. If you say yes, they will assume you have committed to do exactly what they had asked of you.

But if the request is unclear and you say yes anyway, they will still assume you have committed to do exactly what they had asked - only you won't be clear on all the specifics of what they want.

# THE 5 ELEMENTS OF RELIABILITY

1. Customer: **who is asking?** This may seem obvious, but it isn't always. For example, who is the customer when someone says something like, "We need to do some research on this?" Know whom you can go to if you have additional questions or concerns about the request.
2. Performer: **who is being asked** to fulfill the request? Are you clear that you are the intended performer? Are you the right person to do this? If not, who should the request be directed to?
3. Action: **what does the customer want** you to do? Is it something you have the time, ability, and resources to do?
4. Conditions of satisfaction: **how will you know it's been done** to the customer's satisfaction?
5. Timeframe: **when does the customer want it completed?** ASAP is not a useful timeframe unless you are clear about what that means to the customer. You may find the customer upset because you thought of ASAP meant by the end of the week and the customer was expecting it by the end of the day.

# GOOD PRACTICES ON RELIABILITY

If you have any questions about any of those elements and you don't get clarification, you are setting yourself up to make a commitment that you may not be able to fulfill to the customer's satisfaction. If something is missing from the request, it is up to you to ask for it.

If you realize you will not be able to fulfill a commitment, you should revoke or renegotiate your commitment as soon as you make that realization.

How often has someone made a commitment to you and then told you when it was due that they hadn't been able to do it? How has that affected your level of trust in them?

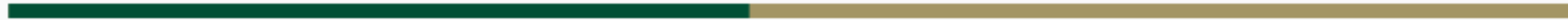
## GOOD PRACTICES ON RELIABILITY (CONT.)

What I've found works best is when an organization's leaders make it clear that they would prefer everyone to acknowledge when they honestly can't meet their commitments and **people who revoke commitments won't be punished.**

Make a practice of **telling your customers when you've delivered** on your commitments.

**Checking that your customer is satisfied** with what you've done also tends to build trust by letting them know you are committed to their satisfaction.

# COMPETENCE



## Competence

Competence is the assessment that you have the ability to do what you are doing or propose to do. In the workplace this usually means the other person believes you have the requisite capacity, skill, knowledge and resources to do a particular task or job; or to act effectively within a specific domain such as accounting, marketing, project management, or leading people. It means you do well enough to satisfy the standards of the person who is judging you.



## Example I

“I brought Linda in to run the office after Ron left so suddenly because I trust her ability as a leader to get the best out of people even in the most difficult situations. I know she’ll come through for them and for us.”

## Example II

“I’m putting Raj on this project because I trust that if anyone can fix this mess, he can. He is my most competent engineering manager. What I ask is that you trust his lead and do what he asks.”

## Example III

“Paul may have been a competent sales person, but he certainly wasn’t a competent district manager, so I don’t know how he got promoted to regional VP. The only thing I can imagine is the senior VP of sales doesn’t know how incompetent he is. Which kind of begs the question, how competent is our senior VP?”

# HIGHLIGHTS ON COMPETENCE

People judge us as competent in one domain but not in others.

However, sometimes the “brightness effect” (halo effect) can cause people to confer an assessment of competence on you in a area where you don’t claim competence.

Example: a highly competent engineer is promoted to a management position because people assume his competence in engineering means he will be competent at managing engineers. Managing others is a different skill set from engineering.

Being competent does NOT mean being perfect. Part of doing something well is knowing what you don’t know, being willing to learn, and to ask for help when you need it.

# GOOD PRACTICES ON COMPETENCE

When you don't know something, say so and ask for help, clarification, training, or whatever you need to perform what was asked. Cultivating trust in your competence doesn't mean you have to be fully competent from the get-go. It does require being honest with others about what you can and can't do, what you know and what you don't.

Ask for feedback from others about your performance. Don't wait for them to tell you that you are making mistakes. Often people won't tell you your performance isn't good enough until you've made some big mistakes and they actively distrust your competence.

CARE



## Care

Care is the assessment that you have the other person's interests in mind as well as your own when you make decisions and take actions.

## Example I

“One of the things I appreciate about working here is that I know my boss really cares about my professional development. He genuinely wants me to be a capable leader, whether I use those skills here or somewhere else.”



## HIGHLIGHTS ON CARE

Of the four assessments of trustworthiness, care is in some ways the most important for building lasting trust.

“The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say, “I.” And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say “I.” They don’t think “I.” They think “we,” they think “team.” They understand their job is to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but “we” gets the credit. This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.’ - Peter Drucker.

When people believe you are only concerned with your self-interest and don’t consider their interests as well, they may trust your sincerity, reliability, and competence, but they will tend to limit their trust of you to specific situations or transactions.

## HIGHLIGHTS ON CARE

On the other hand, when people believe you hold their interests in mind, they will extend their trust more broadly to you. You don't have to convince them every time you need their trust.

They will tend to be more forgiving when things inevitably go wrong. When you occasionally miss a deadline (reliance), say something to one person that contradicts something you said to someone else (sincerity), or make a mistake in your work (competence) others will give you the benefit of the doubt much more readily if they believe you care.

As a leader you will be trusted when, even though you may not be able to act on each individual employee's best interests, they believe you are acting in the best interests of the group's shared enterprise. They see your actions as supporting and sustaining what they value.

# GOOD PRACTICES ON CARE

**Intimacy** is fundamental to the assessment of care in a relationship.

Think of the people you believe have your interests at heart. In every case I bet they will have in some way honestly shared with you some of what is important to them - their values, hopes, dreams, and/or concerns. This is how intimacy is established, how it grows.

If you want people to believe you are concerned about their interests, **listen to what is important to them and tell them what is important to you.**

Listen to others, to what they say, and what they are trying to communicate.

## GOOD PRACTICES ON CARE (CONT.I)

You may have known someone who listened to you as if you were the only person in the world, who gave you their complete attention when you spoke. They let you say what you had to say and didn't respond with words of judgment. They probably also looked you in the eye, and may have asked questions and responded in ways that told you they heard what you meant to say. If you can be this kind of listener for others, they will trust that you care.

Before you speak or act, ask yourself the following question: **will what I am about to say or do serve the people I work with**, work for, my employees and my company, as well as me? Why do I believe it will serve them?

## GOOD PRACTICES ON CARE (CONT.II)

If you recognize that what you are thinking of doing is only really going to serve you and will likely damage the interests of others, ask yourself if doing it is important enough to risk losing their trust.

When you make decisions or take action, let people know you understand how it affects them, even if the effect is adverse. Tell them why you are doing what you're doing and identify the interests your actions serve.

# ENEMIES OF TRUST

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# ENEMIES OF SINCERITY

1. **Failing to update.** Updating your team takes time, but it takes more time rebuilding trust.
2. **Not being clear about your priorities.** When you talk you are creating expectations. Manage those expectations well being precise and specific about what you expect to be done how you'll be supportive about it.
3. **Confusing what you aspire to with what you can do.** Don't talk about yourself as how you'd like to be, but describe yourself as the opposite and ask for help to get there.
4. **Speaking from different sides of your mouth** Avoid possible communication breakdowns by using the same vocabulary with peers. If something can't be said, explain why.

## ENEMIES OF SINCERITY (CONT.)

5. **Telling “probable truths”** Recognize when you would like to say something is true but you are not completely sure it is. Instead say: “I think this is true and I can’t say so for sure at this time. Here is the information I do have...”
6. **Omitting/Withholding** Sometimes we omit something because we don’t consider it useful or important but others may think it is and distrust you for not talking about it. Take the time to understand what others considers important and what they would consider good reasons to withhold it.



# ENEMIES OF RELIABILITY

1. Saying “yes” to a request when you don’t have all the information Fill a complete request.
2. Saying “yes” to a request when you really should make a counter offer
3. Believing “I (or we) can not say no”. do you really have to say yes? Prioritize to whom and in what situations... Are the real consequences of “no” worse than the consequences of saying “yes”?
4. Failing to let your customer know something has changed and you will not be able to keep your promise. Let them know you are not going to BEFORE you get to the deadline it will damage their trust in you. Make a practice of letting your customers know as soon as you know that you can’t fulfill.

# ENEMIES OF COMPETENCE

1. **Failing to understand and agree on success measures.** Take the time to thoroughly discuss standards and expectations regarding performance and success with key stakeholders before taking on a job, role, task, or initiative.
2. **Overselling yourself** Acknowledge your limitations and ask if the stakeholders would be willing to support you as you learn to do those aspects of the job you are not yet competent in.
3. **Failing to recognize your limitations.** Tell the stakeholders what you know you are competent at and what you aren't as yet. Ask them if they'd be willing to support you in learning what you don't know.
4. **Failing to ask for help when you need it.** . After you get into it you may find there are aspects you have difficulty with. You may be tempted to fumble your way through, believing others will cut you some slack. This rarely works and usually results in loss of trust. Go to the key stakeholder, explain the situation, and ask for the help you need as soon as you realize you need it.

# ENEMIES OF CARE

1. Failing to listen to other.
2. Never making yourself vulnerable.
3. Failing to consider others' ideas, opinions, interests, concerns, and/or feelings
4. Failing to clarify team interests. If you make decisions without soliciting input from the people who will be affected by them, they will question your concern for their interests. Avoid this enemy by inviting and actively considering their input to the greatest extent possible, and clarify how a decision will be made: by group consensus, by you alone, by a subgroup, etc.
5. Appearing to “side with” everyone. Make sure they understand that what you ultimately decide to do may not completely coincide with their individual interests.
6. Creating an information vacuum in times of change. Share as much as you can as often as you can.

ENDING



QUESTIONS?



This presentation borrows heavily on multiple sources[1, 2, 3]



R. R. M. Covey, Stephen M.R.

**The speed of trust: The one thing that changes everything.**

2008.



C. Feltman.

**The thin book of trust: An essential primer for building trust at work.**

2021.



M. Vogelgesang.

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