

**Earn Trust. Leaders listen attentively, speak candidly, and treat others respectfully. They are vocally self-critical even when doing so is awkward or embarrassing. Leaders do not believe their or their team's body odor smells of perfume. They benchmark themselves and their teams against the best.**

People sometimes get this earned trust, leadership principle wrong and they sometimes confuse it with meaning being nice to one another or having social cohesion or not challenging each other in meetings. "I won't challenge you if you don't challenge me or this person, you know, isn't trustworthy because they challenge me in a group of people." That's wrong. That's not what we mean.

What we mean by earn trust is being honest, authentic, straightforward, listening intently, but challenging respectfully if you disagree, and then delivering what you said you would.

So, if you want to earn trust, if you say you've got something, deliver it. If you think we're, we're doing something wrong for customers of the business, speak up. If you own something and it's not going well, own it. Say it's not going well, be self-critical, and fix it. If you think we're not as good as we're saying we are benchmark it, use data and show us that we're not as good. And vice versa, sometimes I've seen teams waste time by beating themselves up when they're actually better than they think. Use the data and show us.

I'll tell you a short story. That's a personal story, a little bit embarrassing, but I'll share it that I think is illustrative. Back in the early 2000s, I was co-leading the marketing team, and we were presenting our OP1 or operating plan to the S-team. And back then, we were still using PowerPoint presentations, and we had a slide deck, there was 220 slides. If you can believe it, it was like a six-hour meeting. And I was presenting the 1st 80 slides or something like that. And about 10 slides in Jeff interrupts me and he says, "all your numbers are wrong on this slide." And I was taken aback, and I said, "why do you say that?"

And within a few seconds of him starting to dissect these numbers, I realized that he was right and that all the numbers on that page were wrong. And I was, of course, embarrassed and I said, "you're right. Those numbers are wrong." And he said, "well, why should I believe anything else in this presentation if those are wrong?" And I said, "well, I hope you will because we have 210 more slides in this presentation."

And, you know, it turned out that we didn't have any more errors like that in the rest of the presentation, we got through it. And it was a very good learning experience, but I got done with that presentation and I wasn't resentful or mad at Jeff for pointing that out.

I learned a very valuable lesson on what it means to dive deep and what it means to have ownership over the detail in your presentations. And I earned trust by owning it being vocally self-critical and actually getting better and improving it and providing a much better presentation and account for what was truth the next time I presented to a much broader group.