

Change Your Way To Health!



How to restore trust when it is lost

As young children many of us played a game where we allowed ourselves to fall backwards keeping our body straight, counting on the fact that a friend would catch us before hitting the ground. [You may have even done this as an adult during one of those team-building seminars.] The game is all about having trust in the other person.

Trust goes to the very core of healthy, effective relationships. If we can't rely on someone being there for us, or being honourable or truthful, how can we open ourselves to them? When someone (or some organization, for that matter) doesn't do what they say they will, betrays us, or lies to us in some way, our trust can be shattered. Without trust, a relationship is characterized by suspicion, defensiveness, protectiveness, and disrespect.

Healthy Tips

Regaining trust takes time and patience. It needs to be rebuilt gradually through the course of personal interactions.

Someone needs to take the initiative in trusting the other, despite feelings of uncertainty about the consequences. If neither person in a relationship takes the risk of trusting, at least a little, the relationship remains stalled at a low level of caution and suspicion. Going first is a statement of commitment.

Taking some kind of risk in relation to the other person, and feeling that you weren't injured (emotionally or physically) in the process, is what moves trust to new levels. The paradox about trust is that when we assume people do not tell the truth and cannot keep their promises it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Honesty and consistency are key ingredients in developing trust. This is demonstrated by meeting commitments and keeping promises. We learn to trust someone because he or she can consistently be relied upon to tell the truth.

Sensitivity to people's needs and interests is critical. Listening to what other people have to say and trying to appreciate and understand their particular viewpoint demonstrates respect for them and their ideas.

Trust develops when people feel safe and secure. When your thoughts and ideas are shot down or ridiculed, it doesn't take long to realize that the climate is neither safe nor conducive to making yourself vulnerable.

Trust requires being open about your own actions and intentions. It isn't easy to trust someone who is secretive or who plays their cards close to the vest.



If you have violated the trust of someone close to you, you need to realize that regaining the lost trust is your responsibility and it will take time.

Despite your best intentions and efforts it may be that the injured person cannot find it in their heart to forgive and forget. It may mean you need to move on, accepting that you did your best and learned a hard lesson. The greatest reward is to be able to look at yourself in the mirror knowing that you took responsibility, were honest, and found your authentic self as a result of the experience.

Healthy Tips

Come to terms with what you did. Stop and think about what happened and why. Was it a one-time slipup or a pattern of your character? Don't talk to the person until you understand what you did and are ready to deal with it honestly.

Listen with understanding. If you have hurt someone you can show that you care by listening with respect to their feelings and opinions.

Acknowledge what you did. If you are not ready to swallow your pride and talk to the person whose trust you betrayed, you are not ready to regain their trust. Admitting your mistake is not something you do so you can 'move on' but something you do to re-establish a broken relationship and regain the person's trust.

Assume responsibility. Don't play the victim and try to blame, justify, or explain away your actions.

Be honest. If you are afraid, say so. If you made a wrong move, tell the truth. If you are withholding information and your relationship depends on the other person knowing what is going on, find the courage to be straightforward and honest. The more information you share the better.

Ask for forgiveness. Be specific when you address the issue and ask the person if they can find it in their heart to forgive you.

Share your plan of action. Do whatever needs to be done to create a trusting environment. Let the person know specifically what your plan is to regain their trust and ask them to hold you accountable for keeping your promises.

Stay committed. It may take more than one conversation to make things right. If someone is willing to give you a second chance to rebuild lost trust, make the most of it to show that you are dependable. The other person needs time to observe you and realize that you are "walking the talk".

We want your questions, comments, and suggestions.

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