

Leading Relationships

Build Meaningful Connections, Eliminate Conflict, and
Radically Increase Engagement



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Definition of Leadership: Improvement

Definition of Management: Maintenance

Leadership Key Characteristic: You Don't "Have To" Do It

Working Definition of "Have To": Any task or activity that, if neglected, would eventually find you.

Is there a real cost to low trust? Does low trust impact the following:

- Speed
- Quality
- Productivity
- Commitment
- Creativity
- Engagement
- Morale
- Top Talent Retention

Who Goes First?

Most people approach relationships with the mindset: "If you'll be nice to me then I'll be nice to you." The problem is someone has to go first. Someone has to be nice first, trust first, care first, ask first, and make the effort first. Who goes first? The leader goes first. Going first makes you vulnerable. Doing something you don't have to do, that is in the other person's best interest, demonstrates that you're willing to take risks to build a relationship and to build trust.

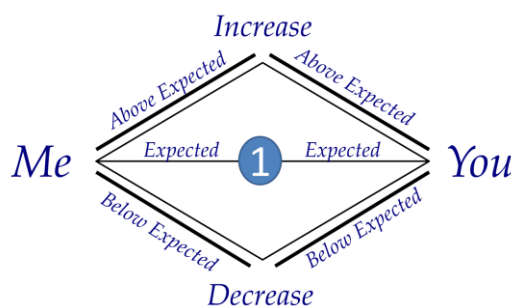
Definition of 100%Trust: An unwavering confidence that you will always act in my best interest.

- When the motivation behind your actions is desire (want to) and not fear, ("have to" or compliance) and the action is in the best interest of another, you are building trust.
- The best way to build trust in a relationship is to consistently do things you don't have to do in the other person's best interest. If actions speak louder than words, the actions that speak the loudest are driven by desire not fear.

Motivation?
Desire
Fear

The 5 Levels of Maturity

All of our interactions in a relationship fit into five categories. In each interaction we can do what is expected of us, exceed those expectations, or fall below those expectations. In each interaction there is a need to be met. When we meet the other person's need in that interaction we *maintain* their trust and confidence in us because we are mature enough to consider the needs of others. When we exceed the expectations, and go above and beyond meeting their need, we *build* trust and confidence in the relationship because we are mature enough to show a desire for a better relationship with that person. When we fall below what is expected of us (play games and go for the win) we *decrease* the trust and confidence that person has in us because we are acting immaturely by putting competition between us, and trying to win. Below is a graphic that represents the opportunity that each party has in each interaction to *maintain, increase or decrease* trust.



These interactions are most challenging when we are feeling anger, disappointment, frustration, or other negative emotions. It's easier to act maturely and consider someone else's needs when we are in a good place. Do we regress to immaturity and competition when feeling negative emotions? These circumstances must be considered when assessing success at the Five Levels.

If both parties consistently demonstrate maturity at a given level then you can proceed to the next level. If both parties are not mature enough to handle success at a given level, then return the relationship to the previous level where you were successful. In any business relationship, it is your job to maintain at least **Level One Maturity**. Even if the other person fails at Level One Maturity, in a working environment, it is typically best for your own career to maintain this basic level of interaction.

As we go through each interaction try not to compare yourself to others that might be at a lower level of maturity than you. The goal is always for you to be trusted at all five levels, even if the person you are interacting with is at a lower level, or your relationship does not warrant consistent Level Five interactions.

1. **Acknowledgement & Recognition** – Success at Level One is showing people respect by making eye contact, greeting them in an appropriate way, and responding to communication. Failure at this level is playing games of punishment or power. Punishment includes the cold shoulder, silent treatment, ignoring a greeting or ghosting a phone call, text or email. Power games include waiting for someone to acknowledge you first, pretending you don't know someone you've met before or shaking someone's hand for too long until they look away.
2. **Facts and Agreements** – Success at Level Two Maturity is exchanging facts and information accurately, answering questions earnestly, and honoring the agreements that we make. Failure at this level is arguing facts just to be difficult, twisting facts, taking them out of context, lying, or misrepresenting facts so you can “win” an argument or conversation, and not doing what we said we would do. When correcting or challenging a fact maturity is keeping the words “you” and “I” out and asking genuine questions when accuracy is needed. We make agreements and we follow through on what we said we were going to do and if we break an agreement, we apologize and we don't try to “get away with it.” If either party breaks an agreement and doesn't apologize we hold each other accountable (see accountability scripts below).
3. **Opinions** – Success at this level is the willingness to see things from a perspective that is different from your own, knowing when to avoid opinion topics, and responding with respect when you disagree with someone else's opinion. In business there is always a way to settle opinion-heavy topics: use what is best for the internal or external customer and what is best for the business as the barometer. Build a business case to support your opinion for how something should be done. When two or more people have differing opinions on how to proceed, the solution which best serves the customer's needs and the needs of the business should be chosen. Failure at this level includes mocking, disparaging, or shaming someone because of their opinion. Failure also includes adopting someone's opinion based on office politics, longevity, nepotism, office bullying, or any other reason besides what is best for the customer and the business.
4. **Strengths & Weaknesses** – Success at this level is highlighting and celebrating each other's strengths and ignoring or working around each other's weaknesses. If the weakness cannot be ignored or worked around, then it is necessary to provide feedback to improve it. Failure at this level includes

taking advantage of another person's weakness, talking behind someone's back, withholding compliments, setting someone up to fail and trying to hide or ignore their strengths. Collaboration, engagement, teamwork, retention, productivity, and high morale are all benefits of success at this level of maturity.

5. **The Big Picture** – Success at this level is exchanging big picture needs with the confidence that the other person would only ever use this information to help, assist, support, encourage, or root you on as you pursue meeting those needs. Big picture needs include our priorities, values, goals, and what is important to us including things like respect, money, appreciation, safety, security, growth, development, purpose, status, recognition, love, choices, variety, responsibility, and reputation. Failure at this level would be for someone to learn this information to manipulate, control, exploit, “push buttons”, or use it against you.

Apologize:

Relationships are about meeting needs, not about winning or losing. When you break a commitment there is some degree of relationship damage, creating the need for an apology. Your apology should be sincere and communicate your remorse and your commitment not to repeat the behavior again in the future. When you don't apologize you are prioritizing being right and winning over meeting a need. When you apologize for something, focus on the part where you can take responsibility. Don't offer an apology and then explain away all responsibility; that is not an apology. An apology is admitting where your action, decision, behavior, or words were regretful.

Accept Apologies:

If the apology is sincere and you sense remorse and a commitment not to repeat the action again, accept the apology by saying “apology accepted.” This lets the other person know the relationship has been repaired. Accepting an apology means you forgive what happened. After you have accepted an apology from someone, don't revisit the issue unless they do it again. Making someone pay repeatedly for a past mistake that has been remediated by an accepted apology is manipulative and, in extreme cases, abusive.

Addressing Broken Agreements Script:

- Part 1** – Create safety and security.
“I need your help.”
- Part 2** – Make sure the time is right.
“Do you have a minute?”
- Part 3** – State the agreement and the current behavior that is out of alignment with agreement.
- Part 4** – Solve the problem together.
“...and I need your help” or “Can you help me out?” or “I would appreciate any help you could give me.” or silence.

When Broken Agreements Continue:

- Part 1** – Ask for help.
“I need your help with something.”
- Part 2** – Create safety and security.
“I may be way off with this...”
- Part 3** – State what you are sensing.
“I’m sensing that everything is not okay” or “I’m sensing this is no longer a good fit.”
- Part 3a – Check in...**
“Am I off?”
- Part 3b** – Wait for a response in silence.
- Part 3c** – Thank them.
“I greatly appreciate you sharing that with me...”
- Part 4** – Make a new agreement moving forward.
“Can I have confidence this won’t happen again?” or “Where do we go from here?”

Be Prepared:

- Yelling creates a hostile environment. If the other person yells share with them that if you can’t discuss the problem without yelling then you will not be discussing the problem.
- If the person responds by attacking you they are sidetracking. You had the courage to bring up a specific broken agreement with them so you get to resolve that broken agreement before addressing any of their issues.
- If the person responds with anything other than an apology steer the conversation in the direction of an apology and/or that you are just looking for an agreement and confidence that it won’t happen again.

EMPLOYMENT MOTIVATION CHECKLIST

To discover what motivates you, rank each of the following 18 items. Pick your number one answer from each group of six and then rank your top three.

Job security	_____	
Interesting work	_____	
Growth / Development / Gain experience	_____	#1 _____
Enjoy the day-to-day tasks of the job	_____	
Freedom / Autonomy / Empowerment	_____	
Overall benefits package	_____	
Promotions / Advancement	_____	
Relationships with coworkers and/or colleagues	_____	
Belief in mission / Purpose / Impact of organization	_____	#1 _____
Fair and consistent work environment	_____	
Social aspects of work environment	_____	
Company (Brand, Size, Locations, Success, Growth)	_____	
Like supervisor or manager	_____	
Recognition and appreciation	_____	
Belonging / Being a part of something bigger	_____	#1 _____
Commute / Work from home options / Travel	_____	
Hours / Flexibility of hours / Vacation / PTO	_____	
Pay / Bonuses / Raises / Ownership / Stock	_____	

Ask your supervisor to complete the checklist with respect to his/her perceptions of what motivates you, and then share your responses. Discuss similarities & differences.