

# Trust in Relationships

Trust embodies the traits of honesty, respect, and caring. According to psychology today, "trust is one of the most crucial building blocks of becoming emotionally connected with someone; it's absolutely fundamental for a healthy relationship." And yet it is far easier, and takes a lot less time, to lose trust than to build it. Here are some ways to begin to rebuild lost trust.

- ✓ Say what you mean, and mean what you say. Our instincts for self-protection often lead us to the proverbial "fool-me-once" moment. We then often adjust our behavior and expectations to avoid getting let down. In order to build trust, don't say things that you don't intend to do or that don't represent your true feelings.
- ✓ Be vulnerable. We build trust through vulnerability. Time and daily interactions with others often starts this process, but your willingness to be open (and sometimes vulnerable) with others grows it. For example, avoiding closeness within a relationship for fear of getting hurt, leaves no room for trust building.
- ✓ Remember the role of respect. Belittling, condescending, and contemptuous behaviors are among the most damaging to the maintenance of trust. At times, we may take our closest relationships for granted and forget that respect is vital to building trust.
- ✓ Give the benefit of doubt: Give your partner the opportunity to come through for you. Set aside your doubts. If you ever hope to truly rebuild trust, you have to give them a chance.
- ✓ Express yourself, especially when it's difficult: Emotional connections occur when feelings are expressed and you demonstrate your willingness to listen. Try to avoid dismissing or invalidating feelings and show that you care. This means making an effort to understand your partner's viewpoint without shutting them down. It takes a lot of maturity to be able to talk about feelings in a healthy and constructive manner.

Once trust has been restored, make every effort to keep it. Consistency is Key! Multiple trust violations compound, which make them increasingly more difficult to overcome.