

# Trust in Me

## Building Trust in Relationships


### Objectives

- A Explain the importance of trust.
- B Demonstrate techniques to build trust.






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Think for a moment about your best friend, your favorite teacher, or a respected boss. What do all of these people

So? What

have in common? Chances are, you trust each of them. You know that you can depend on your best friend to hang out with you when you're having a bad day or to drive you to school if she says she will. You can rely on your favorite teacher to treat every student fairly and to care about helping you succeed. And your respected boss can be counted on to communicate honestly with you and be loyal to her employees.

Being able to trust friends, teachers, and coworkers allows you to build important relationships, both personal and professional. But trust works both ways—it's also important for those people to trust *you*. How can you build trust in your relationships, both in the business world and in your personal life? Keep reading to find out!

A



## What Is Trust?

When someone says they trust you, what do they mean? **Trust** occurs when someone is able to rely on you. This means that you're **dependable**—you are reliable and you do what you say you will do. In other words, if you make a promise, you keep it! People trust you when they know they can count on you to be honest, or to tell the truth no matter what. If you're trustworthy, you're someone other people can believe in.



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Think about all of the important relationships in your life, whether they're at home, at school, or at work. They probably all have trust in common. After all, it's hard to be friends with someone you don't trust, or to learn from a teacher you can't count on. Trust, then, isn't just a personal quality—it's all about relationships. Your teacher might not trust you because you don't always turn in your assignments on time or do your best work. Your best friend might trust you because you're always around when he needs help. Trust doesn't just happen—it's your job to build trust in each important relationship you have. First, let's learn more about what trust is and why it's so important.



This video from Tedx Talks, "Building Trust/James Davis/TedxUSU," explains more about what makes a person trust you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9FBK4eprmA>.

### Where is trust important?

Want to be successful in the workplace? Then trust is essential! It's hard for a business to run smoothly if employees can't trust each other to complete tasks or do quality work. When employees have trusting relationships with one another, the result is a happier, more productive work environment. A boss who trusts you is more likely to reward you with promotions or raises. And customers who trust you (and, by extension, your company) are much more likely to support your company again and again.

- ▶ *Building trust leads to better work relationships, more rewards, and a happier work environment.*





This article by Cynthia Measom, “The Importance of Trust Within a Team,” explains a few more reasons why trust is so important for team members: <http://work.chron.com/importance-trust-within-team-3940.html>.

Unsurprisingly, negative consequences can occur if you don’t have trusting relationships at work. Without trust, employees may hold grudges against one another, making for an unhappy or even toxic work environment. This leads to decreased sales, decreased efficiency, and decreased profit. When employees spend their time questioning each others’ motives, they naturally spend less time focused on work.

“Career Coach: How to Build Trust at Work” by Joyce E.A. Russell lists several other negative consequences that can occur when a workplace lacks trust: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/career-coach-how-to-build-trust-at-work/2014/04/11/bc2cb6ec-c0be-11e3-bcec-b71ee10e9bc3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/career-coach-how-to-build-trust-at-work/2014/04/11/bc2cb6ec-c0be-11e3-bcec-b71ee10e9bc3_story.html).

But trust isn’t just essential in work environments. It’s necessary in your personal life, too. Building trust in your relationships with friends and family members allows you to form bonds that are stronger, more resilient, and longer lasting. If people don’t trust you, they are less likely to be honest with you or put effort into building friendships with you.

A lack of trust can make it difficult to succeed in any area of your life, whether you’re at work, home, or school. That’s why it’s so important to focus on building trust in every important relationship.

## What does it take?

We're all capable of building trust in our relationships, but trustworthy people often possess all or most of the following characteristics:

- **Honesty.** Honesty, or being truthful, is one of the most obvious qualities that all trustworthy people have in common. But this doesn't mean that all trustworthy people say everything they're thinking. A big part of earning trust is knowing *when* you should share important information and *how* to share difficult information with tact and kindness.
- **Dependability.** If people don't believe that you'll do what you say you'll do, how can they trust you? Dependability includes being accountable for your actions and your mistakes. This means accepting responsibility when things go wrong. For example, if a dependable person misses a deadline for a project, s/he will own up to the mistake and do whatever's necessary to make it right.

## THE GRAY ZONE

You've been at your job for over two years, and in that time you've managed to build trusting relationships with your boss and your coworkers. You even consider many of your coworkers to be your friends. One such friend, Alison, tells you that she's looking for a new job and has been on several interviews so far. You know that Alison plays an important role in your company. If she leaves, it will put the whole company in a tough position until someone can be found to take her place. You consider telling your boss that Alison is thinking about leaving. That way, your boss will be able to start looking for a replacement and the company will be better prepared. You want to be honest with your boss, and you don't want her to find out later that you knew Alison was leaving. However, Alison expects you to keep her information a secret, and you don't want to betray her. You want to build trust in your relationships with your boss and Alison, and you feel like you're stuck in the middle. What's the ethical thing to do in this situation?



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▲ *Dogs aren't the only ones who understand the value of loyalty. Trustworthy people know that being loyal to their friends and jobs is essential.*

- **Integrity.** Integrity means always doing the right thing, no matter what. This means that you do the right thing even when no one else is watching, when it isn't easy, or when it might not be in your best interest. People can depend on you to not simply take the easy way out.
- **Empathy.** Empathy is the ability to relate to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of other people. You can show empathy by truly listening to others and respecting their needs. This means trying to see things from another person's point of view and acknowledging their feelings. People are more likely to trust you if they know that you care about them, not just your own interests.

- **Loyalty.** Loyalty is being faithful to a person, ideal, or company. Trustworthy people are loyal to their friends and jobs. This means that you don't say bad things behind your friends' backs or steal supplies from your job. People trust you when you're loyal because they know that you have their best interests at heart.
- **Transparency.** Transparency means being truthful when you communicate. Of course, it's hard for people to trust you when you lie, but transparency is more than that! It also involves speaking up about your feelings and communicating openly. For example, customers at your job will trust you if you're open and honest about the positives and negatives of your products. And don't hide things— if you mislead people by exaggerating or hiding the truth, they will likely not trust you.



- **Consistency.** Consistency, or reliably producing similar results, is a major component of trust. If you're consistent at work, your boss can trust you to do the same quality of work every day. Do you think your boss would trust you if you called in sick often, came into work late whenever you felt like it, or frequently rang up sales incorrectly? Probably not. Trustworthy people don't just show integrity, honesty, or other important characteristics *some* of the time—they show them *all* the time.



You can read about more traits of trustworthy people in the article "9 Traits of Trustworthy People" by Cynthia Bazin: <http://www.success.com/mobile/blog/9-traits-of-trustworthy-people>.

## Summary

Trust occurs when someone is able to rely on you. Trust is important both at work and in your personal life, and a lack of trust can lead to negative consequences. Characteristics that trustworthy people possess include honesty, dependability, loyalty, transparency, integrity, empathy, and consistency.

## TOTAL RECALL

1. What is trust?
2. Why is trust important in the workplace?
3. Why is trust necessary in your personal life?
4. What are seven characteristics that most trustworthy people possess?

## Trusty Techniques

Now that you know what personal qualities trustworthy people possess, it's time to learn the techniques you can use to build trust in your relationships. Relationships aren't built overnight, and neither is trust. Keeping these techniques in mind, and using them on a regular basis, can help you build trust at work and in your personal life.

- Keep your promises.** Perhaps the most important thing you can do to build trust is to keep your promises. If you don't do what you say you'll do, it's difficult for others to count on you. If you promise to hang out with a friend this weekend, keep your promise instead of ditching your friend when better plans come up. And don't make promises you aren't sure you can keep. If you don't think you can cover a coworker's shift on Friday night, then don't promise to work for her. Being upfront is a better way to build trust than breaking promises.



The video "Leslie Kerner on How to Establish Trust When Building Relationships" from Capture Your Flag explains the importance of doing what you say you'll do: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0R5uAZ0P-I>.

- Be fair.** Fairness means treating others the way that you'd like to be treated. Creating equal relationships encourages other people to trust you. If your classmates know that you treat everyone equally, they're more likely to trust and count on you. This also extends to your work environment. Of course you should treat all of your coworkers fairly, but don't forget about customers and competitors. Treating them fairly, instead of trying to cheat them out of money to make a sale or get a deal, will earn their trust.



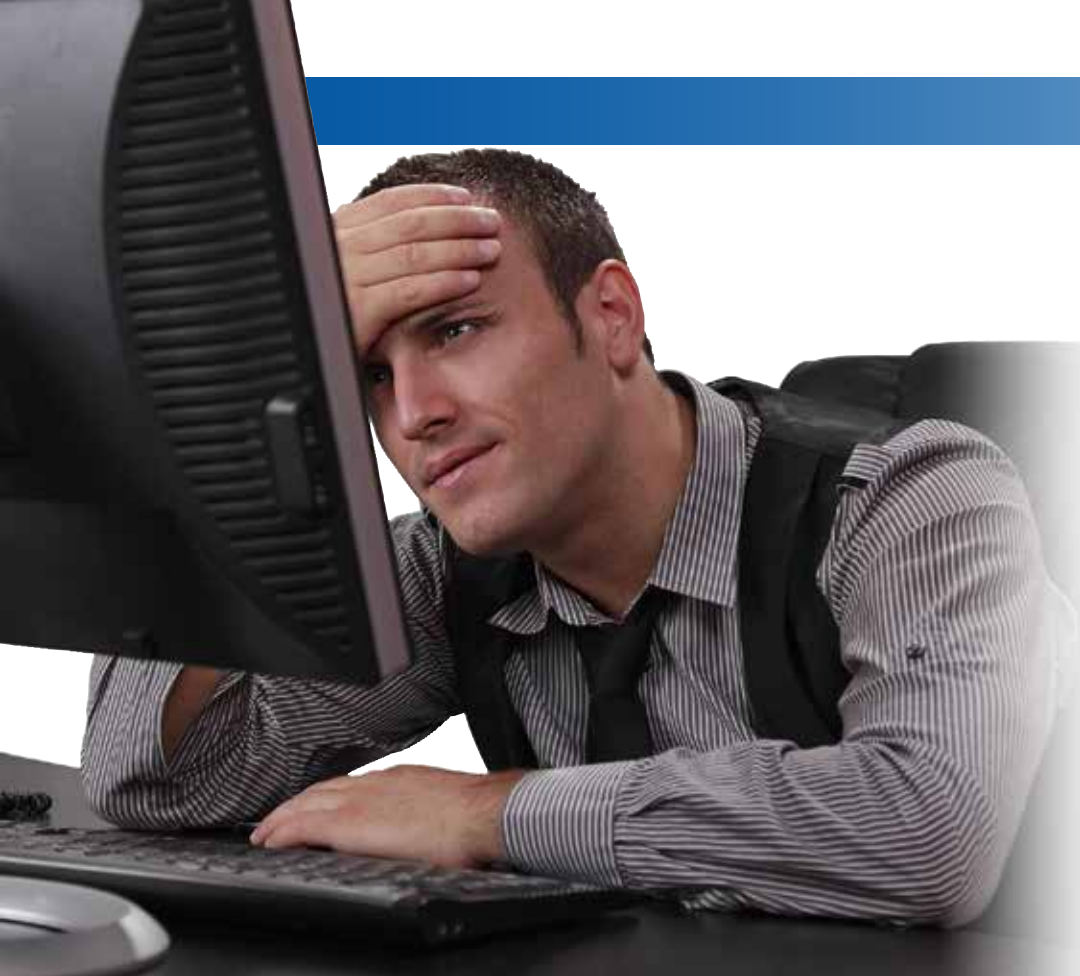




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▲ *Showing respect for others is essential when it comes to building trust.  
This means showing basic politeness to friends, customers, and coworkers.*

- **Show respect for others.** Respectful people always honor the rights, freedoms, views, and property of others. This means listening to other people's opinions instead of starting fights, not taking things that don't belong to you, and showing basic politeness. For example, what would you do if a group member suggested an idea for a group project that you didn't agree with? Telling the classmate that his/her idea is stupid and would never work is not a good way to build trust in the relationship. It's far more respectful to listen to his/her idea before politely explaining your own thoughts.
- Respect
- **Don't share confidential information.** At work and in your personal life, you probably come across lots of information that's private. Although being honest is an important part of being trustworthy, it's just as important to keep confidential information to yourself. If a friend tells you personal information, don't gossip about it or share it with other friends without his/her permission. And if your boss asks you to keep something confidential, don't tell your coworkers. Helping people protect their confidential information helps build trust.



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- **Take responsibility for your mistakes.** Everyone screws up sometimes, and making a mistake doesn't necessarily mean you don't deserve to be trusted. In fact, making a mistake can be a great opportunity to prove that you can be counted on! When trustworthy people mess up, they don't ignore the mistake or blame other people. Instead, they take responsibility and own up to their mistakes. This can involve apologizing and/or working to fix the mistake. When people know that you will be accountable for your mistakes, they'll be more likely to trust you.

◀ *Everyone makes mistakes sometimes! Trustworthy people take responsibility and own up to their mistakes.*



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Owning up to your mistakes can be easier said than done. This article, "Taking Responsibility for Mistakes at Work" by Alison Green, explains what you can do to take responsibility and be more trustworthy: <http://quickbase.intuit.com/blog/reader-question-taking-responsibility-for-mistakes-at-work>.

- **Do your best.** People are much more likely to trust you if they know that they can count on you to try your best and work your hardest. You can build trust in your relationship with your boss by working hard every day and taking initiative. You can build trust with your teacher by always completing your assignments on time and to the best of your ability. And you can build trust in your personal relationships by always trying to be the best friend possible. Doing your best also means that even if you make a mistake or let someone down once in a while, the people in your life will still trust you.

- **Put others first.** You can't build trust in your relationships if you only care about yourself. That's why it's so important to prioritize the needs of others. This doesn't mean that you should completely ignore your own needs, but it does mean you must show empathy and think about how your actions can benefit other people. For example, if you volunteer to stay late at work to help out a coworker, your boss will see that you care about the company's needs as well as your own. If you tell a friend that you'll help him study for Algebra even though you have a busy weekend, he'll see that you care about him and his grade. People will naturally trust you more if they know that you're willing to help them.
- **Communicate often and openly.** Communication is one of the keys to trust building. Would you trust someone who didn't listen to you or answer your questions? Probably not. Truly pay attention to the people you talk to, instead of thinking about what you'll say next or checking something out on your phone. Answer questions as honestly and openly as you can (without giving away confidential information!). People are more likely to trust you if they know you give them honest answers. Remember to be open in your nonverbal communication, as well. Looking people in the eye and not crossing your arms lets other people know you're listening to what they have to say.



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- **Focus on your ethical principles.** It's important to do the right thing, no matter what the situation. Whether you're with friends, coworkers, or classmates, your ethical principles should not change. You should focus on the long-term consequences of your actions, not just the short-term benefits. For example, you might be able to get a better grade on a test by cheating, or make an extra sale for your company by lying to a customer. But in the long term, actions like these will not help you build trust with your teacher or customers. People are more likely to trust you if they know they can count on you to do the right thing all the time.



## Summary

Techniques that can help you build trust in relationships include keeping your promises, being fair, showing respect for others, not sharing confidential information, taking responsibility for your mistakes, doing your best, putting others first, communicating often and openly, and focusing on your ethical principles.

## TOTAL RECALL

1. Name nine techniques you can use to build trust.