

HOW A **CULTURE OF  
UNDERSTANDING** TRANSFORMS  
TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

THE **CONNECTION**  
**QUOTIENT**

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## CHAPTER 16

# RELATIONSHIP TRUST

### PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

In the past, I was strongly driven by the fear of rejection. The result was that I showed my respect for people by pleasing. But this isn't really showing respect. It's more of a (subconscious) rational behaviour I adopted in order to get something in return. I gave because I wanted ultimately to gain emotionally.

Today, when I give respect, it's no longer predominantly about me. At least, not generally. Of course, I have my ego moments. For instance, when I'm on stage I enjoy being the centre of attention, but I've discovered how much I enjoy genuinely seeing others for who they are, and respecting them for that. Being able to contribute to this gives me tremendous energy. So yes, I do become a better person through it. The difference is that it's no longer my primary motivation, but more of an enjoyable by-product.

What this turnaround has brought about, among other things, is that I have learned to trust myself and to respect myself for who I am, including both my positive aspects *and* my dark ones. The more I can trust myself, the less confirmation I need from others. In other words, if I genuinely respect myself, I can also genuinely respect others.

This impact on myself has an impact on others. It contributes to building trust in the relationship.

Stephen Covey specifies 'showing respect' as one of the 13 behaviours that lead to relationship trust. Relationship trust is the logical next step after trust in oneself and is essential if you want to create lasting connections. And as a manager, you work with people with whom you enter into a connection and contribute to their engagement in mutual connections. From this perspective, it's important to know more about this topic. This chapter will give you valuable insights.

## BEHAVIOUR AS A BASIS FOR RELATIONSHIP TRUST

Covey states that trust is the most essential ingredient within every relationship.

Today, changes occur increasingly quickly. And so, commitment on the part of employees and managers is more crucial than ever. This way, the value we should attach to mutual trust increases even more. According to Covey, it's the most important, and yet most undervalued, ingredient for business success.

In Chapter 12 ('Trust in yourself'), I described the four core themes that form the basis for self-confidence: intention, integrity, capacities and results (Covey, 2008). In this chapter, I describe the 13 behaviours that create trust in relation to another person (also based on Covey's ideas). This is about the behaviour you demonstrate. But before you start reading, I want to give you a few tips on what to watch out for:

- Just as with using your core qualities, when we look at behaviours, using any of them excessively will not be effective
- The 13 behaviours complement each other, creating a balance in your actions and an impact on the other person. For example, always 'talking straight' will result in the impact of the bull in a china shop. By adding two behaviours – 'listen first' and 'demonstrate respect' – you will create an effective mix.
- The first five behaviours deal with your own character. Abusing one or more of these five is the quickest way to disrupt mutual trust.
- The next five behaviours deal with your competencies. It's good to know that demonstrating these behaviours is the quickest way to build up relationship trust.
- The last three behaviours are a combination of both character traits and competencies.

Character	Competence
1 Talk straight	6 Get better
2 Demonstrate respect	7 Confront reality
3 Show loyalty	8 Clarify expectations
4 Create transparency	9 Practise accountability
5 Right wrongs	10 Deliver results
11 Listen first	
12 Keep commitments	
13 Extend trust	

**Figure 14:** Thirteen behaviours that create relationship trust

### **Behaviour 1: Talk straight (character)**

Be open and honest. Speak the truth and try not to appear better than you are. If, for example, you've done something wrong, don't try to think up a smart reason that will let you off the hook. Just truthfully mention why you didn't keep to your agreement. And, don't forget that a half-truth is a lie.

### **Behaviour 2: Demonstrate respect (character)**

Demonstrating respect means showing sincerely that you accept someone as being a worthy and valued individual. It has nothing to do with someone's functional position, or whether he can be of use to you. Whether someone is a manager or a cleaner, a team leader or a receptionist, they all contribute to the success of the organization. Demonstrating respect is often a question of the little things: looking a person in the eye, saying thank you, holding the door open for someone, or addressing them by their first name.

### **Behaviour 3: Show loyalty (character)**

If your employees have achieved a fantastic result, do you give them the honour they deserve for their work? Or, do you steal the spotlight

for yourself? Be sincere, stand for and behind your colleagues, and be proud of them. Tell them explicitly, and tell others. Conversely, be reserved in your criticism of your colleagues in the presence of others. If you do need to be critical or negative about others, do this when the person in question is present, or discuss beforehand what you intend to bring to the table.

#### **Behaviour 4: Create transparency (character)**

Did you know that six out of ten employees are not satisfied with their manager? This often has to do with a lack of transparency, perhaps because the managers don't admit their mistakes, or don't dare to. Or, it can be because they aren't open about bad news within the organization. Instead, you need to be crystal-clear wherever possible. Be transparent about those things you might be afraid that you can't be transparent about. And remember that being transparent yourself is an invitation to others to create more transparency in their contact with you.

#### **Behaviour 5: Right wrongs (character)**

If you make a mistake, accept responsibility for it. Explore how you can put it right. Don't wait too long but establish what you can do immediately. Don't forget to say a genuine 'sorry.' You may find this awkward, but if you can manage to put your ego to one side, it will pay off big time.

#### **Behaviour 6: Get better (competence)**

Are you the kind of person who wants to continue learning throughout your life; who dares to take risks, asks for feedback and learns from his mistakes; who expresses his gratitude when he receives feedback? By adopting this attitude in life, you will not only learn more, but you will also be an example to others. That's a wonderful foundation to enable a team and organization to become increasingly powerful.

#### **Behaviour 7: Confront reality (competence)**

Everyone goes through difficult times now and then. The question is, what do you do in such a situation? Do you beat around the bush and put off doing the tasks you should be doing, or do you tackle the difficult tasks straight away? Don't bury your head in the sand, but say explicitly what you find difficult, look for assistance and start resolving the situation.

**Behaviour 8: Clarify expectations (competence)**

What do you expect from your employees? Make clear-cut agreements about what needs to be done and the corresponding behaviour. If you express your expectations, don't forget to check with the other person whether they have understood, and that they know they can act on them in their own way. Be as clear and concrete as possible. In other words, make them SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound.

**Behaviour 9: Practise accountability (competence)**

Take responsibility for your own results and hold others accountable for their responsibilities. If things aren't going the way you want them to, don't point the finger at others, but take action yourself. Don't walk away from your agreements. Be open towards others holding you accountable for your responsibilities.

**Behaviour 10: Deliver results (competence)**

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Intentions are fine, but ultimately, it's all about results. That's why your team and function exist. Build on a solid track record by delivering what has been agreed upon, within the time and budget allocated. Don't over-promise and don't under-deliver.

**Behaviour 11: Listen first (combination of character and competence)**

What happens in terms of leadership and your possibilities as a leader when you stop transmitting? What becomes possible when you ask questions and listen to the answers instead? If, instead of delivering a monologue or debating, you create a dialogue? If you are sincerely willing to understand the non-standard viewpoints and insights of others? If you adopt this attitude, you will be working on the third level of conversation (dialogue) as described in Chapter 15.

**Behaviour 12: Keep commitments (combination of character and competence)**

'Agreed is agreed.' I tend to hear this kind of statement in environments where agreements are not automatically fulfilled. Fulfilling simple agreements is generally not that much of a problem, but it's a different story when it comes to more complex or politically sensitive issues. When you find yourself in such a situation, be honest and transparent. If you already know beforehand that you won't be able to keep a promise, or you realize

at some point that you won't be able to fulfil it, just go ahead and admit it. Be the one to come up with solutions and be open to other people's ideas for solutions. Focus on the future, and on how to deal with the situation from now on in as constructive a way as possible.

### **Behaviour 13: Extend trust (combination of character and competence)**

Show that you fundamentally trust people instead of basing your actions on minimizing risks. People who have fully earned your trust can give it you in abundance. When it comes to those who are still earning it, give them just a little more than they're used to. With those you're not sure about – for instance, if there's a question about how effectively they'll collaborate – base the trust you extend on the situation, the risk and the credibility you experience. At the same time, don't forget to continue to trust your gut feeling.

### **ASSIGNMENT: Extending relationship trust**

Relationship trust derives from behaviour you demonstrate. What you do, both privately and professionally, ultimately has much more impact within your relationships than what you say. Or, as the old expression goes: 'Empty vessels make the most noise.'

This exercise asks you to reflect on how you respond to the behaviours specified above.

Read through all 13 behaviours and rate yourself on a scale from one to ten. You can also ask someone else to tell you how they rate you. A one means that you don't demonstrate this behaviour at all, and a ten means that you act completely in line with this behaviour. When your list is complete – and if you've had one compiled by another person – note how satisfied you are with your current scores. Is there a difference between your list and that of the other person? If so, there's a real opportunity for you to gain insight into your blind spot.

For all behaviours, make a note of how you would like to score in six months' time. And then, start experimenting with your behaviour. What are you actually going to do? Who will you ask for feedback on the impact of your changed behaviour on his relationship trust?

**Trust is of immeasurable value. Will you be the first to give it?**

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# WHY BRINGING HUMANITY INTO YOUR RELATIONS IS THE PATH TO BETTER BUSINESS RESULTS

“*The Connection Quotient* shows us that bringing humanity to our workplaces and our relationships creates sustainable business results – and, ultimately, a more positive world. Marco Buschman is a champion for all leaders who put humanity first, day after day, and a challenger of those who do not.”

**Mike Carson**, Partner, McKinsey & Co, Founding Partner, Aberkyn, and author, *The Manager – Inside the Minds of Football’s Leaders* (Winchester, UK)

“*The Connection Quotient* provides the reader with many references and practical tools to expand their leadership effectiveness. Starting with individual consciousness, Marco Buschman offers frameworks for reflection, exercises for personal discovery and shares his experience as a consultant and coach of executives and senior teams for those that want to lead teams, organizations and the larger context.”

**Felipe Paiva**, Partner, Artisan Consultoria (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

“Being a good ancestor today demands us to connect to build better futures for tomorrow. In *The Connection Quotient*, Marco invites us into a structured conversation where we can explore what connection means as a practice. It’s playful and sincere, emotional and rational, fun and hard work; like many of the best things life has to offer.”

**Charlie Ursell**, Head of Advisory, Watershed Partners (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada)

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