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Partial Lecture notes for Free Download

The Problem of TRUST – who to, and who not to.

Some of the most pain-filled lives I have ever worked with got there by not understanding trust. To trust means to entrust oneself, one's safety and future to the judgments and decisions of another...the ability to *predict* how that person will respond and that one's confidence will not be betrayed. Trusting means making oneself very vulnerable to another's thoughts and choices – sometimes extremely so, and sometimes for life. Some trusting is therefore risky, and some not so. The alternative to trust is avoidance of any submission and loaning of power to another by maintaining total control of lives, both yours and theirs. But the real problem is in knowing how to tell whether or not a person, or group of people, is worthy of trust – worthy of submission – worthy of the risk.

Loss of Basic Trust

The failure to form basic trust in childhood results in the twin conditions of insecurity and control, and is usually the result of a combination of a) early betrayal, and b) a lack of parental instruction on how to know *who is trustworthy and who is not*. This often results in some form of childhood vow *never to trust another*; 'my survival is now all up to me' etc.

Naïve Trust.

On the other hand, to be naïve is to entrust oneself to those who are not worthy of it, which is to invite disappointment, pain and - depending on how much is trusted - possible disaster. (We have, in this manner, almost summarized the human condition – did you notice?) For children, naïve trust comes naturally. It is also a naive assumption to think that everyone functioning in the church is trustworthy.....

To learn how to trust in the wake of trauma, will, in the author's experience, probably require professional help, but it's much easier to trust when one has ways and means of deciding *who* is trustworthy and who is not. To help you grow in this, the queen of the life-skills, consider the following list carefully.

1) Examine their track record: - Is there a history of reliability, faithfulness, and integrity? What is their record on previous relationships, or in previous situations? The future will not be different to the past, if there has been no repentance; no re-evaluation of their values, methods and beliefs. And if this is so, there must yet be a period of time when such changes are proved. Remember, forgiveness merely clears the way for trust to be earned, via better choices, proved when under pressure and exposed to temptation, without reversion to old patterns.

3) What kind of people do they relate to? Birds of a feather (still) flock together. A man may still be known by the kind of company he keeps, and a woman by the kind of company she keeps at a distance.

4) Are they willing to be transparent or do they resent any questioning? That is to say, how do they react to being held accountable for their actions? This is most revealing. A proud heart resents questions, and is not to be trusted at all. If in doubt, ask the necessary questions, and observe carefully what reaction you get.

6) Look carefully at how they treat their family; their parents, their spouse, their children. 'Whose interests are constantly being put first?' is the deciding question here.

8) Are **they blame-shifters**, minimizing their culpability or do they accept responsibility for themselves?

9) What do they do with **emotional pain** – run from it or face up to it, and try to bring it to resolution? (Addicts of any sort, always run.)

10) Check your **gut reaction**. Do you get a bad feeling about this person, or does your spouse or parents? If so, beware. It's not a foolproof guide, but it should be checked out and listened to carefully.

Warning; Jealousy stalking

Beware paranoia and paranoid jealousy. Check yourself out; is it his or her actions which render him / her untrustworthy, or are you being lied to by your own bruised feelings and echoes from your past?

Remember: -

- You have the right to be convinced that they actually want to earn your trust, before you give them your time, your heart or your possessions. Trusting someone who has no intention of changing is a game for mugs and rescuers. Mugs and rescuers.
- Only you know what it will take to earn your trust back. No one else can determine that for you, but have you actually worked it out, and then have you clearly communicated it to the one who betrayed? Probably not, so the ball might well be *in your court*, not the culprit's, as you might think. (See Matt 18)
- There may be others who know this person far better than you do. Talk to them, at length if necessary, and place their assessment above your own, if the person under consideration is new to you.
- There's an important difference between delegating and abdicating. Trusting the untrustworthy *is not an act of love*, it is an act of laziness or fear on the part of the one who is about to be let down – fear of offending, fear of conflict, fear of anger, or fear of hurting another's pride perhaps (rescuing).
- It's much better to say, "you haven't earned my trust yet" than to say, "I don't trust you", but have you, told them *specifically* how they could earn it? (Note the word 'specifically' please.) Do you yourself yet know?
- Faithful in little, faithful in much is an old saying, which is still true.

Empowering Questions: -

1) Why are you trying to trust somebody who obviously hasn't earned it? It denotes real pressure upon you to 'make it work' doesn't it? Where is this pressure coming from?

2) Are you an over-optimistic rescuer? If so, be careful. You are in danger of being used and/or disappointed, and then follows the inevitable resentment, bitterness and relationship breakdown. Is that where your help is heading you?

"You will know them by their fruit..." but a lazy mind doesn't bother checking the fruit out first.