



Episode 47: How to Build Trust More Quickly

Welcome to In the Right Direction podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness, one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. Here's the starting question today. As you think about the people in your life who you live and work with, whom would you like to build more trust with?

Trust is a topic that surfaces frequently in coaching sessions. Feeling trusted by others and feeling a trust for others is vital to most of us. Life and work depend on relationships, and we want to be in relationship with people we trust. When there's a high level of trust, conversations are easier, and we're more likely to relax into vulnerability and authenticity. When we trust someone, we have faith that they'll support us. They will have our back.

When there's a lack of trust, relationships feel very different. We might worry about what others think of us; we might hold back for fear that what we do or say will be used against us; or we might get frustrated when people don't deliver on what they say.

A lack of trust erodes collaboration, productivity, and feelings of good will.

Here's an example of a client of mine. After a reorg, she found herself reporting to a new boss who she had known casually, although had never worked for.

From the start, it seemed like there were trust issues from both sides. My client felt micromanaged. Her boss would ask her to do something and then immediately send follow up emails, which she interpreted as him implying that her work wasn't on track. Even though my client had been in the field for many years, she didn't feel that her manager trusted her.

My client, too, realized she didn't trust her manager. In meetings, the manager would talk about other colleagues in a negative way, blaming them for things that were not completed. This behavior eroded my client's trust for her new manager. She wondered, what does he say about me? What does he really think of me?

Trust is a necessary agreement for relationship happiness, focus, and peace of mind. When there's a lack of trust, people worry. They hold back and protect themselves. Their brains make up stories about the other person's motivations and beliefs.

When thinking about what it takes to build trust, there are a few factors. First, it's often time. The more we know someone, the more time we spend with them, the more conversations we have can help build trust. Second, trust happens through authentic interactions. When we open up and share things about ourselves, and feel them being received with grace and kindness, it builds trust. Lastly, trust happens when people do what they say they're going to do. It's easier to trust someone who keeps you updated, meets deadlines, and follows through with expectations.

Here's the problem, though. Life moves fast, and we often want to and need to build trust quickly.

The good news is that there's a strategy to do this.

Today's leadership and communication strategy today is one that can help build trust in a relationship more quickly.

This tool is a phrase that can easily be incorporated into key conversations. It's a phrase that is both a statement and a question that can be used to help people more quickly understand each other's expectations, ways of working, and purpose so that relationships can be clearer and easier.

The phrase is: here's what you can count on me for.

Here's what you can count on me for. Let your brain think about a moment. Do you feel how powerful that phrase is? It holds some big ideas. It holds the idea that you are in relationship with another person. It assumes connectedness and collaboration: that each person has a part in the relationship. And it implies accountability: that people will show up in the way and behave in the way they intend to support the other person.

Here's what you can count on me for.

When having a conversation with someone you're looking to build more trust with, there are different ways you can use this phrase in conversation.

First, let's set a context for having a conversation about building trust. A conversation to talk about how to work together effectively is called a "designing the alliance" conversation.

It is OK – and highly recommended – to have a designing the alliance conversation with new people you find yourself working with. Especially if the work is important, and you want trust to be the foundation.

Let's return to the client I mentioned at the beginning of today's podcast...she didn't like being micromanaged, and her intention was to demonstrate to her manager that she was worthy of trust.

She initiated a designing the alliance meeting with her manager. She explained that trust was very important to her, and that as they were getting to know each other, she wanted to help build that trust.

Then said to her manager, here's what you can count on me for. And then she listed out some key things that she wanted her manager to count on her for – things that she realized she had never explicitly stated out loud.

She said, you can count on me to ask questions when I need clarification.

You can count on me to share the company's message, even I personally might have another opinion.

You can count on me to update you about issues that might affect our timeline.

And you can count on me to update you weekly about my progress.

The "here's what you can count on me for" tool is powerful. It calls a person forth to get clear on the roles and responsibilities they take seriously, for the sake of supporting someone else – whether in a personal relationship or in an organization.

Sharing your "here's what you count on me for" statements help build your confidence, your brand, and your inner leader. Because you get to clarify and choose what matters most to you, and what's authentic and purposeful, and then you get to share that.

You can also use this phrase in a question to others.

When designing an alliance with someone new or someone you're working with in a new way, you can ask questions like: What would you like me to count on you for? What would you like to count on me for?

Asking these questions gives people an opportunity to reflect on their leadership, their style, and their values. For example, if someone has a core value around being transparent and keeping everyone in the loop, they might say, You can count on me to be transparent. This statement embodies their core value.

Discussing the answers to these questions builds both the relationship and the trust. When we are explicit about what our role is and is not, it creates clarity. And when there's more clarity, everyone has a more defined sense of expectations, which allows for more ease and peace of mind.

We know what our role is and what the other person's role is. There are clearer boundaries and a clearer road map. Trust can grow.

Now, there's one important caveat, which I hope goes without saying. If you say something that the other person can count on you for, you need to follow through. As we all know, a lack of follow through can quickly erode trust. Be sure to hold yourself accountable.

Let's bring this to you.

Take a moment and think about someone you have a relationship with – where you're wanting to build more trust. Think about the way you are together, and what you explicitly want to share about what they can count on you for. Clarify in your own mind how you want to show up, the type of relationship you want to build, and the role you want to play. Be intentional, get clear, and then communicate it.

Discuss what each of you want to count on the other person for. And feel your relationship deepen.

Thank you so much for listening and being part of my community. If you would like some coaching on how to build more trust with your key relationships, please reach out. Email me at deb@debelbaum.com or go to my website debelbaum.com and schedule a complimentary consult. I look forward to it. I'm here to help you create your best self at home and at work, so that you're confident you're moving in the right direction for you.

Until next time!