

## 3 Truths About Trust (ABCD METHOD)

Virtually everyone agrees that trust is a vital ingredient for healthy and successful relationships. Unfortunately, most people don't think about trust until it's been broken. That's the worse time to realize its importance because by then it may be too late to fix the damage that's been done. Instead of leaving trust to chance, we need to have an intentional focus on proactively building it. When our attention is focused on a specific goal, our energy will flow in that direction to help us accomplish it. There are three truths about trust we should keep in mind as we strive to build high-trust relationships.

**Trust is a skill**—Trust doesn't "just happen." It's a skill that can be learned and developed through intentional effort. In order to do so, it's helpful to have a framework of what comprises trust in a relationship. In our **Building Trust** training program, the ABCD Trust Model is used to represent the four elements of trust. Trust is built in a relationship when you are Able, Believable, Connected, and Dependable. Able people are



trusted because they are competent in what they do. They have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform well in their roles. The second element of trust is Believable, which is acting with integrity. You are Believable when you behave in alignment with your values and those of the organization, are honest, ethical, and fair in your dealings with others. Connected people build trust because they develop rapport with others, are good communicators, and have the best interests of others in mind. Finally, Dependable people do what they say they will do, are accountable, and responsive to others.

**Trust drives results**—Trust isn't just a “soft” interpersonal skill that fills our relationships with warm fuzzies, unicorns, and rainbows. Trust drives bottom-line results in organizations. The Great Place to Work Institute has shown that high-trust organizations have 50% lower turnover than low-trust organizations, and employees who trust their leaders perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization. **Our own research** has shown that people who trust their leaders intend to perform at higher levels, use their discretionary energy to benefit the organization, remain with the organization, endorse the organization as a good place to work, and be a good organizational citizen.

**Trust begins with you**—Without risk, there's no need for trust. Trust and risk go hand in hand. In order for trust to develop, someone has to be the first to extend it. It's been said that the best way to see if someone is trustworthy is to trust them. Someone has to make the first move and I advocate that each of us needs to take the responsibility to extend trust to others. When we do so, we open the door for others to prove themselves trustworthy and reciprocate by extending trust to us. It's a virtuous cycle that reinforces itself.

Building trust is like raising plants in a garden. You have to plant the seeds, feed them, nurture their development, and regularly tend the garden. The same is true in our relationships. You have to plant the seeds of trust, feed them, and nurture their development. You may not see results immediately, but over time you'll see the level of trust grow and one day will reap the rewards of having high-trust relationships.