



Principle: Trust

Definition: Confidence in the integrity and character of a person or organization; the belief that those on whom you depend will meet your expectations; a relationship of reliance. The opposite is suspicion.



Overview

Trust has always been an important principle, but it's particularly hot at the moment because it's been on the decline. The **World Economic Forum** reports that trust has been sliding for quite some time, not only in corporations, but in governments, churches, even the **United Nations** and the **Olympics**.

Trust is an absolutely critical leadership principle touching every aspect of our lives – in our work, in governments, churches, families and institutions of every size and stripe. **Stephen M.R. Covey** in his book **The Speed of Trust** recommends “smart trust”, that is, extending trust thoughtfully rather than naively. He advocates trusting others after careful analysis, taking reasonable risks. We know that trust is more often established through deeds rather than words as Emerson underscored when he said; “What you do speaks so loudly, I can hardly hear what you say.”

As a critical leadership principle, trust can be thought of as both a noun and as a verb. It's a noun when it describes the condition we want to create. Trust is that state that we all want to be in. Whether it's within an organization, a community or a family, it doesn't get much more powerful than to be in a relationship of trust. And at the societal level, it's still on most of our money!

It's a verb when it describes our reliability or trustworthiness. For example, when we deliver on our promises, we are building trust. When we trust others, there's a much higher likelihood that they will trust us. Trust can empower others because when they observe our virtuous behavior, they naturally want to emulate it. It's been said that “a failure in trust may be forgiven more easily if it is interpreted as a failure of competence rather than a lack of honesty.” More than almost anything, dishonesty destroys trust and produces suspicion and skepticism.

When we talk about trust within the **Inside First®** framework, we link it to being born of the mind, embraced by the heart, and delivered by our hands.

Leading Practices: Practices are the possible approaches you might take to put a key principle into action.

- Make commitments carefully; then do what you say you will
- Be humble and respectful; thank others and give credit for their contributions.
- Listen first; try to understand others' perspectives
- Clarify expectations
- Be loyal
- Make friends
- We must first start with ourselves to build trust with others.
- Do the right thing; integrity is when there is no gap between intent and behavior – we tend to judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behavior – let your actions speak
- Take real responsibility; make things happen; produce results
- Tell the truth; communicate openly and authentically
- Apologize quickly
- Don't skirt the real issues; confront reality

Questions on Trust

- When you are transparent and err on the side of disclosure, what does that cost you? How does that affect trust?
- How can we advance character development and trust in youth and emerging leaders?
- Describe a situation where your action built trust. What happened?
- When you let your promises slip, what is that about?
- How does your approach to communication build trust?
- How does trust-building benefit from your spiritual perspective?
- In your experience, what's the difference between a white lie and a real lie?
- When have you extended trust to others? What resulted?
- How can building trust facilitate change? And how does real change occur?
- Who do you trust? Do you trust your boss? And who trusts you?
- What kinds of leaders are needed in our community in the future?
- How does pride influence trust-building?
- When you've made a mistake, what's your first reaction?

*P.O. Box 2482 Edwards, Colorado 81620 Phone: (970) 306-3276
Email: JohnHoranKates@gmail.com Web: www.vailalliance.org*