

Trust in Relationships
by Kim Olver

In my work with couples, I often find a lack of trust at the root of many challenges they report.

Trust is a Verb

We have been taught to believe trust is a commodity to be earned by others. Once they have passed certain tests, then we feel safe to extend our trust. I would like to entertain the idea that trust can be a verb, rather than a noun. It's a choice you make and says much more about you than it does the person to whom you are extending that trust.

When you are involved in a relationship and you say you trust that person, it is more than a noun. It's not just a thing you extend to a person like a gift—it is followed up with behaviors—things you do and things you don't do.

When you trust someone, you know he or she will do the right thing. You know they have their affairs (no pun intended) under control. They are faithful and loyal. You don't need constant reassurance of this—you just know.

What you don't do is constantly grill a person about where he or she is and with whom he or she is spending time. You don't have him or her followed looking for proof of infidelity. You don't snoop around in his or her personal belongings or private places. You trust that he or she can be trusted.

Trusting has so much more to do with who you are as a person than it does with who your partner is. When you are secure in yourself and know that you are worthy to receive love, then it is natural to trust.

The Law of Attraction

The Law of Attraction is a simple law of quantum physics which demonstrates over and over again that you will attract into your life that upon which you focus. If you look at life and see positive, happy things then you will attract more of that positive energy into your life. When you look at life and see negative, unhappy things everywhere, then guess what? You are going to attract more ugliness into your life.

If you always find yourself in relationships where you have been disappointed and lied to, ask yourself what is it about you that brings dishonorable people into your life? I'm not in any way blaming you for your misfortune, but I know people attract what they think about. So ask yourself, what are your thoughts that actually pull dishonest people into your life?

If you want more trust in your life, you have to be more trusting and more worthy of trust. You can't get from others what you don't possess in yourself. If you are looking

inside out, then you must ask yourself, “Am I a trustworthy person? Does my partner realize that I have integrity and can be trusted? Do I extend trust to him or her?”

Of course, there will inevitably be someone you trusted who didn't deserve it, but don't allow that to shake the foundation of your self-confidence. It is right to trust the person with whom you are involved. If he or she is undeserving of your trust, in time this will be revealed to you and then you can move on and forgive—whether or not you choose to stay with the person. But if your choice is to forgive and stay, then put trust into an action verb once more.

It does no good to stay if the trust is forever gone. You will find that eats at your self-esteem daily and you will turn into someone you don't recognize and definitely don't like.

Be the person you want to be in the relationship. Don't let paranoia and suspicion ruin a good thing.

Beyond Lost Trust

I was recently talking to one of my clients about her readiness to begin a new relationship. This woman, Susan, had been divorced for about five years and believed she was ready for a new dating relationship in her life but nothing was happening for her.

I asked her if there was something holding her back. She is an attractive and fun-loving person. I suggested that maybe her ex-husband was still holding too much power over her emotions to allow her to engage in a relationship with someone new.

She thought about that and realized that what really happened is that when her husband had an affair with a much younger woman, it totally shook her self-esteem. If she doesn't like herself, how can someone else be attracted to her?

So often, when our trust is shattered, we tend to look at ourselves. What's wrong with me? Why did someone I love betray me? Why didn't I see it? Instead, we need to look at the character flaw in the other person. When someone makes a promise to another and breaks it, then that is a flaw in them, not you.

Trusting really comes down to which is most important to you—trust or self-protection? If you are more concerned with keeping yourself safe, you probably won't trust because you are afraid of being hurt. However, can you really protect yourself? Won't you still be hurt to learn of a loved one's deception? Without trust, you will never achieve that level of intimacy a trusting relationship provides. What will you really lose by trusting?

The most important thing, though, is to not lose respect for yourself. You are a worthy person. Spend some time engaging in some self-nurturing behavior. Learn to love yourself again. Your self-esteem cannot be based on the frailties of another person.

I have two questions. Do you want to be in a relationship with someone whom you can't trust? And do you want to be in a relationship where you are behaving as a jealous, crazy person?

This is definitely a personal decision and I simply ask you to evaluate your own behavior, and regardless of what your loved one does or does not do, are you able to be the person you want to be in your relationship? If not, are you willing to continue to function within the relationship or would it be better for you to end it? Only you can decide and only you can know what the right answer is for you.

Trust is Multi-Level

The trust one needs in a relationship is multi-level. At the base level, there is a trust in your partner. Of course, at this level, you could be right or you could be wrong. Your partner may deserve your trust or he or she may not. Your partner may be totally and completely untrustworthy. You have no control over that at all. If a person is unworthy of your trust, that in no way diminishes you. It is all about their character. You can't let it shake your self-confidence.

At the next level is a trust in oneself. At this level, it is important to trust your own instincts in people. You may not always be right. People are very good at deception if they want to be. Remember Ted Bundy? However, if you trust in yourself and your good judgment, when you make a mistake you won't be devastated. You just realize that you were involved with a person who was a master of deception and you move on undaunted but perhaps a bit wiser.

Finally, there is trust in the universal order of things—a divine spirit, if you will. If you have total and complete trust in the Universal Spirit or your Higher Power then that trust will never be betrayed. The Universal Spirit will always provide you with what you need whenever you have a need.

I believe what happened with my client is her trust was placed completely in her partner. When the trust started to waiver, then the relationship failed. It's OK to trust the person with whom you're involved but your broader trust should be placed in yourself and then ultimately in the Universal Spirit.

Have you lost your trust? Do you want to get back to it? Let go of the wrong that was done, trust in yourself again and ultimately trust in the Universal Spirit to always and forever provide you what you need when you need it. You will discover a sense of peace and calm that will sustain you through the difficult and lonely times.