

13 Honest Tips To Build Trust In A Relationship



The Happiness Blog

HOW TO BUILD & REBUILD TRUST IN RELATIONSHIPS

Trust requires mutual respect. And it begins with you. If you are not willing to trust your partner with your life's little secrets and big intricacies, you cannot have a lasting relationship.

Love is nothing if it doesn't carry trust, and positive expectations make the core of trust. In times of need, what one most expects is their partner's positive response to their calls. Once again, the onus is on you. *You must show your partner you're worth their efforts to entrust you with their love.*

13 HONEST TIPS TO STRENGTHEN TRUST IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Trust grows over time when a person keeps fulfilling their promises. You gradually learn to expect others will keep their promises (Rotter, 1967).

In romantic love, you trust the other person only when you believe they are benevolent and honest (Larzelere and Hudson, 1980).

Reflect on and ask yourself if you have good relationships. If you say 'No' to the most crucial ones, explore why. Probably, you'll find there are trust issues.

And if you want to move past the status quo, but not sure how to fix it, then here are some extremely helpful tips to fortify the trust in your relationship.

1. FIND OUT IF YOU COULD ALIGN YOUR COMPATIBILITIES.

You would never fully trust an incompatible partner. Start your quest from there.

While it's difficult to find a compatible partner or a friend to live with, yet it's important to have them. Ideally, you'd want to bond with someone who shares the same values as you and has similar goals in life.

One way of finding out how compatible your partner will be is by going through a week or two trial period of spending 24 hours together. This will give both of you an idea about how you feel about your life together.

At the end of this time, evaluate your compatibility alignment with this in mind: **No person fits anybody's perfect idea of a partner.**

If both of you feel nothing vital is missing from your relationship, then you are likely a suitable match for each other.

If your values and goals in life are not aligned, then it may be best if you consider ending the relationship before committing. Alternately, instead of saying

goodbyes, you could try changing the type of the relationship, as from being partners to [being friends](#).

The toughest [decision hangs](#) on treading the commonest path, when you like some of their qualities and abhor others. Two questions to ask here are:

1. *Would they change some of those behaviors or goals for being in the relationship?*
2. *Would you tolerate some of those things they wouldn't change for the rest of your lives together?*

2. BE 100% TRANSPARENT, WITHOUT HIDING YOUR VULNERABILITIES.

You want to trust and be trustworthy in a friendship or a partnership. The building trust starts with honest transparency. [Let them see your scars](#) and know your weak points.

When in love, you're vulnerable. Paradoxically, this vulnerability adds strength to your relationship. You feel secure they won't exploit your flaws and secrets, but will stand guard for you.

Vulnerability begins with transparency. Being 100% (*maybe 90% is a better goal*) transparent about your thoughts and feelings with your partner is necessary, even though difficult.

Building healthy levels of trust in a relationship requires time and effort from both. You need long patches of time together to share freely and grasp tenderly each other's demands and dreams.

And to communicate openly, the couple must have, or, at least, attempt to have, complete honesty and transparency with one another.

Remember, though, love and trust don't always go both ways. **You could trust someone without loving**

them, but you can't love someone without trusting them.



Honesty is always a one-step process.

3. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND FRANKLY, BUT DON'T FORCE YOURSELF.

The first rule is to communicate more. The more you communicate with people you need in your life, the more trust they have in you and the relationship.

The second rule is to keep your commitments and expectations clear from the start. Make yourself available when you're needed. And tell them when you need them. Show you are dependable and ask when you need their support.

Be clear in a way your partner understands you. Do not beat around the bush with your communication style. But, please, be kind when you do that.

When answering questions or suggesting solutions, use an assertive and compassionate tone of language, so they are clear about your intentions.

However, even when what you suggest is crystal clear, do not hound the person to follow it through. You have supplied the information; [how they use it](#) is their privilege. **They have free will; don't dare take that away.**

4. KEEP YOUR PROMISES AND WALK YOUR TALK, ALWAYS.

If you want to build trust in a relationship, you must show and maintain integrity and consistency.

- Do what you say you'll do.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Make sure the same rule set applies to both of you.

For example, if a friend asks you for help and says they'll repay the favor by getting coffee for both of you next time, make sure they keep their end of the bargain. If they don't follow through, don't accept their offer again.

Give them a chance to walk their talk. If they misuse it, close that door forever.

As another example, if a friend asks to borrow money and promises to pay it back with interest, ask how much interest they would pay and how long they would take. Get a written record (like an email) from them.

If you have doubts, they'll not keep their word, then decline politely and boldly. If they make you feel

pressured, then help them out with *such a small amount that you wouldn't mind losing forever*.

The “keep your promises and walk your talk” applies most to how YOU act in relationships. To have trustworthy relationships, make sure you live up to what you say. **Show first, expect later.**

Either don't make promises or do everything that you promise, whatever the situation (unless it feels like the end of the world). Make it clear to people what they can expect from you.

Finally, use your intuition. Let your gut feeling be the best judge to test the viability of your promises.

5. BE TRULY THANKFUL. KEEP A DIARY OF YOUR GRATITUDES.

[Gratitude to other people](#)'s kind acts is a key to our happiness. A true sense of gratitude involves three steps:

1. feeling it
2. appreciating it
3. expressing it

A gratitude journal records the things you are grateful for. To help yourself be more thankful, **start a relationship-specific gratitude journal.**

Write three things your partner did that day that made you smile or feel happy about your relationship. Then, read aloud that list to them.

It could be little things, like when laughed their heart out at your joke. A record of your appreciation shows your partner you notice and cherish them.

[Gratitude stops you](#) from taking your partner and your relationship for granted.

If you missed this one, now is the time to make it right and learn [how to do the three good things.](#)

6. DON'T ALWAYS PUT THE RELATIONSHIP UNDER A MICROSCOPE.

You will have occasional doubts about your partner. No relationship goes untouched by it. The point is to find out where it stems from.

Does it come from their unfamiliar behavior or your mind playing probable scenarios? Before putting them under a microscope, ask yourself if you are expecting too much of your partner?

Consider your nagging inner voice as your lighthouse—it can show you if the waves are stormy but can't tell you which direction to take.

If your mind plays out negative loops about your partner's behavior, do not [amplify it by overthinking](#). Ask them about it. But first, make it clear to yourself what direction would you take if they accept your doubts as true, or reject them.

The same rules apply to you. Assure them you are ready to open up honestly of their doubts about you.

7. SHOW AND EXPECT HONESTY AND AUTHENTICITY AT ALL TIMES.

You can't fake your way into a lifetime relationship. Eventually, they'll know. And you'd lose your entire investment—time, energy, feelings, emotions, commitment.

Rather be authentic and honest; it's less work and more pay.

This is especially where the question of rebuilding trust comes. Think about what happened in the past that led your partner to want you to be completely honest with them.

You may have broken their trust by being dishonest or by doing something you should have known was wrong. If they agreed to forgive you, then change your outlook and behavior for the better.

If trust is what you want, then trust is what you give.

So, this time, promise not to break their trust. Show them they can trust you by treating them with respect and caring about what they want in your relationship.

8. REALIZE AND ACT ON YOUR PARTNER'S NEEDS.

Can you correctly point out what your partner needs from you?

Don't guess and don't lie. Don't either pretend you know more than they do. Or declare you couldn't know because of their secretive instincts.

Did you ask them ever? For all, your partner may not even know what their needs are when it comes to you. And they might think the same about you.

Begin with the premise you don't know each other well enough. Ask them what their interests are, what they like, and what they want you to do for them. Similarly, express what you expect from them and how would you want the relationship to shape up.

If you can't get your partner to share their needs with you, you cannot address what needs to be done to improve your relationship. To do that, both of you have to be honest about what's not working.

However, if your partner is holding out on you, they might have reasons to hide their needs and desires. Don't jump to the belief they don't care about you.

Have empathy for them. When you're not on the same page, talk it out.

Schedule free time for knowing each other better by asking and listening.

9. ACCEPT YOUR MISTAKES AND FAILURES WITHOUT ARROGANCE.

Take ownership of your role in the relationship.

Be honest about your flaws, shortcomings, and mistakes. Do not hide important aspects that could hurt your relationships. Your partner should never have to feel insecure or wonder what you're up to.

If you lost the job, tell them. If you squandered a boatload of money, let them know. If you felt attracted to another person, let them know.

Everyone's armor comes with chinks; overlook them or help your partner seal them. Look for your partner's strengths rather than pointing out your own. Help each other grow and nurture.

Never call out your partner's imperfections. Their flaws made them what they are today. They may not have the same level of flaws as you do, but that doesn't make you any superior.

Accepting a person with their flaws eventually makes them feel honored, adored, and treasured.

10. SURPRISE THEM WITH RANDOM ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS.

Show up with small thoughtful gestures of kindness and love each day.

When you take their feedback, respond with kindness. When they get upset, let them talk it out while you listen with tenderness.

Set rules before starting tough conversations—no shouting, interrupting, making derisory gestures or expressions, or walking away.

Be creative in finding solutions to your doldrums. For one, you could each sit with a pencil and notebook. Write the thoughts arising in your mind while they talk. At the end of your talk, **both of you write at least three points you agree upon.**

It would help you get familiar with each other's preferences.

Don't be afraid to decide for both of you, as long as you do it out of love and care. If your partner isn't too happy with the way you planned things, take their opinions on how else you could have done. Then adjust your behavior for the next time.

Put your partner first. If you are all about yourself, you'll end up being the narcissist in the relationship. Make sure they always have enough space to say what they want to.

Remember, you can never be kind enough and you can never overdo it.

11. BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT WHEN YOU OPEN UP ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.

Emotional intelligence is how you identify and manage your emotions and react to other people's emotions. It can help build trust in relationships.

First, take responsibility for your emotions and behaviors. You alone are the owner of your emotions, so do not blame others for causing them.

When you understand your emotions, you also realize the behaviors they put into action.

So, when you feel you're about to react to your partner in a foul way, you also realize it is because of jealousy rising in you.

Celebrating and reflecting on life's pleasant moments is a key aspect of emotional intelligence. **Those who feel more positive emotions are more likely to have fulfilling relationships.** They are also more resilient to face adversities.

Emotional outbursts can occur when you don't take the time to slow down and process your feelings. To overcome your impulsivity, try mindful meditation, practicing certain yoga poses, or watching a cartoon movie.

So, the next time you and your partner have an abrasive conversation, you could pause yourself before breaking out. This pause helps you check your rash action, and make a more rational response.

12. CREATE A SCHEDULE FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TOGETHER.

Physical activities, eating right and, of course, a good night's sleep will help increase your energy levels, happiness, and optimism.

When energetic, you can do the tasks you promise them, and even go an extra mile for them. When happier, you bond better and believe more in each other. With an optimistic outlook, you anticipate a brighter future, built on mutual trust.

Plan activities together, like a morning jog. Find time to spend together outside your house. Take an evening off to drop in at the oldest library in your city.

Go on uncommon adventures together. Like visiting an orphanage to celebrate your birthdays and sharing your happiness with those kids.

All these come together to build trust in your relationship.

13. A MOTLEY OF HELPFUL INSIGHTS ABOUT BUILDING TRUST.

- Trust, a commitment to each other and your relationship, is 100% or nothing at all.
- Let your relationship not become a competition for who is doing better for the other. Do not make it all about yourself. To solidify mutual trust, keep the focus on the entire relationship.
- Let your partner know they can depend on you. Assure them you will stand up for their needs. Give them a lot of reasons to stick around.
- You can't always know what's going on with someone else. It is easy to assume and then go wrong. Instead, ask yourselves if you are enjoying each other's company. If not, make adjustments.
- Set realistic goals and chart out an effective pathway to realize your dreams and goals.
- Don't cheat. Be positive and hopeful. Stay focused on each other's concerns. Listen actively. Show up every time they need you. Walk beside them. Take your turn. Make plans together. Change with them.
- Forgive each other more. Don't make issues out of the small slipups.

WHAT IS TRUST?

Trust is the “confidence that one will find what is desired from another, rather than what is feared.” (Deutsch, 1973).

Research describes **trust as an attitude or state** that changes depending on circumstances. But, according to Jane Penaz Eisner, in close relationships, **trust is a trait**, that is, a specific feature determined by genes, environment, or interactions between them. There are 3 dimensions of trust—predictability, dependability, and faith.

Penaz, introducing the **Interpersonal Trust Questionnaire** in her Ph.D. dissertation [Interpersonal trust in close relationships](#), says, “*Departing from current state approaches, I argue that (1) trust in close relationships is a trait, and (2) dispositional trust importantly influences friendship formation.*”

WHY IS TRUST IMPORTANT?

Trust is vital for us to thrive as humans. The earliest humans couldn't have survived the harsh living conditions without counting on each other. They entrusted each other with their lives while cohabiting as social groups.

While most of them huddled around a bonfire, someone was on the lookout for predators. Their mothering duties were community-based, and **each child was every mother's child**.

We are here today because they laid those early rules of mutual trust. It is mutual trust that keeps modern humans secure from physical, mental, and emotional harm. From marital and personal to social and professional partnerships, we thrive because we have each other's back.

Researchers [Larzelere and Hudson](#) found when one person in a romantic relationship trusts another, they base it on: 1. **benevolence** (whether the other person is interested in their good or merely seeking their own gain), and 2. **honesty** (whether they can believe in their declared intentions).

Without trust, we go through the motions of keeping alive a relationship merely for the sake of it.

HOW DO YOU LOSE TRUST?

Trust is presumptive in nature, and there will be times when the future will not mirror the past. Even if they were completely trustworthy in the early days of the relationship, your expectations from them in the future might go somewhat less fulfilled.

There has been little research focusing on factors that contribute to the erosion of trust. Research by Holmes, 1987, found distrust in marriages is marked by (1) perceptions of neglect by the other partner, and (2) perceptions that the other person is trying to exert control in the relationship.

From the non-scientific sources, we found the following anecdotal explanations:

- Trust is lost when you break promises
- Trust is lost when you show disrespect
- Trust is lost when you are not honest
- Trust is lost when you attack or abuse
- Trust is lost when you are not dependable
- Trust is lost when you are not open
- Trust is lost when you are not committed
- Trust is lost when you break the rules

FINAL WORDS

You invest in a relationship to create something far greater than yourself. You're investing in someone you plan to spend a long time with. Make sure you play your part with honesty so the investment grows to a point where nothing can tear it down.

No one can do that for you. Mostly, it's up to you. The more confidence and conviction you put into a relationship, the more it adapts to echo those values back to you.

Relationships are amazing and incredible experiences, but they can be brutally harsh and hurtful when tainted with distrust, envy, and greed.

By focusing on authenticity, staying open to forgiveness, and showing readiness to change for the better, you can build and restore trust.

The greatest gift you can give someone in your life is the ability to trust you. So, tell them right away, "I'll be there for you."

[PostScript: Scientific literature on trust-building is scant (one 2016 paper is this: [Developing trust in close personal relationships](#)). While research abounds on the nature and importance of interpersonal trust in close relationships, most do not spell out practical strategies for building trust.

As a result, we could not base much of the material in this article on journal papers.]



Author Bio: Written and reviewed by **Sandip Roy**—a medical doctor, psychology writer, happiness researcher. Founder of [Happiness India Project](#), chief editor of its blog. Writes popular science articles on happiness, [positive psychology](#), and related topics.