

# ***Trust: Rebuilding the Foundation***

**By Jean MacKenzie**

Trust is one of those elusive concepts that people rarely ponder until there is a problem. Most people can rhyme off a list of people they can trust, but people don't often think about why they trust someone or what comprises trust until that trust has been broken and they are faced with picking up the pieces.

If someone close to you has broken your trust, or if you have broken the trust of a loved one, then you know how difficult it can be to mend the resulting rift. Trust, built through small, sometimes imperceptible, acts over a long period of time, can swiftly be broken by one inconsiderate act if it is severe enough. Or, trust may erode gradually through repeated minor infractions. In either case, if an attempt is made to rebuild trust, the parties involved are often left wondering, "Where do we begin?"

If you have broken your spouse's trust and are trying to mend the damage, you may be feeling like you have tried everything in your power to make amends. You are left frustrated with your seeming inability to gain any ground. If you are the one whose trust has been broken you may desire reconciliation with your spouse, but find yourself constantly suspicious of his or her behaviour.

In order to rebuild trust, or even to continue building on existing trust, it can be helpful first of all to define what trust means. Lewicki and his colleagues describe trust as "an individual's belief in, and willingness to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another." But what factors go into creating such a state? How do you get someone to have such faith in you?

Here are five building blocks to keep in mind when working to regain someone's trust:

**Tell all**- Be transparent. Clearly communicate the intentions and motives for your actions, especially in areas related to the broken trust. For example, if in the past you frequently came home late because you were having an affair and you have to stay late at work, you had better be prepared with some explanations and proofs.

**Reliable**- Be consistent and predictable. I tell clients that one thing that makes a person trustworthy is you know they will follow through on their promises. So, look for opportunities to make promises and follow through. Even simple things, like agreeing to pick up a loaf of bread on the way home, can build trust as long as you follow through.

**YoU**- There is an anonymous quote that states, "Trust is a peculiar resource; it is built rather than depleted by use." You need to give trust in order for trust to be returned. Think of "you," as in your spouse. Be sure to ask your partner, "Do *you* have any input?" "Would *you* help me make this decision." Show your husband or wife that you trust them and they will be far more likely to return that trust.

**Show concern**- When you violated your spouse's trust, you were acting in your own self interest. In order to reverse the damage you need to show your partner that he or she is your greatest concern by demonstrating sensitivity to their needs, desires, and interests.

**Team identity-** When trust was broken in your relationship you weren't working as a team. Forming a marital goal that keeps the needs and goals of each partner in mind will foster a sense of unity and guard against selfish deeds that hinder growth in trust.

If you are the one whose trust has been broken, remember that your spouse can only reclaim your trust if you give him or her the opportunity to do so. Start with small things. Be patient with your spouse and yourself. Restoring trust will take time and effort. However, if you can overcome this hurdle, as with so many other obstacles in a relationship, you can develop a stronger, healthier relationship.

### **About Jean**

Jean is a marriage and couples counsellor whose approach in working with couples involves the development of techniques for solving current problems and achieving unending growth in relationships. Jean strives to assist couples of various backgrounds in learning to solve their own challenges because a couple that knows how to problem solve can keep their love—and their marriage—alive forever.

Jean also offers Catholic counselling to couples wishing to incorporate the Catholic faith into the counselling process, helping couples to develop a relationship pleasing to each other and God. Jean has a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has trained in marriage and family therapy.

So, if you think that your relationship could use a little help-- or even a lot of help,--give Jean a call today and take that important first step in turning your marriage into a “happily ever after” story.

### **Where do you start?**

Look no further.

1. **Go to [www.jeanmackenzie.com](http://www.jeanmackenzie.com) and sign up for my free newsletter “Happily Ever After: A Guide to Healthy Relationships,” filled with helpful tips on how to nurture your relationship.** You will also receive the free report, “**10 Tips for Resolving Anger in Your Relationship.**”
2. **Call today for a free, no obligation, 20 minute phone consultation.** We will discuss your problems and together decide how I might be able to help you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean sees clients in her office in Fredericton, NB and offers telephone and online counselling. She can be reached at:

Phone: 506-461-7279

Email: [jean@jeanmackenzie.com](mailto:jean@jeanmackenzie.com)