

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TRUST IS ABSENT IN THE WORKPLACE?

Sadly, many organizations operate in a perpetual state of distrust.

Why? For many reasons, but we've narrowed the list to these key themes:

- Fear Reigns Supreme
- Status is Power
- Uncertainty Prevails
- Winning at All Cost is the Company Mantra
- Falseness and 'Superficial Niceness' Dominates the Culture

Chances are, if you describe your workplace culture using one or more of these clichés or phrases, you are working in the absence of trust. And, you may even believe in your heart of hearts that that's just the way it is! You believe that you cannot change it; so what do you do? You ignore it, do your job, collect your pay check, and alas, you accept what cannot be changed. Sigh!

Well, if you are resigned to accept as your plight that you will work until retirement in the "land of distrust" (no judgment here), we can still explore (aka fantasize) a workplace in which trust is at the core and the foundation of its culture.

As a roadmap for our journey, let's use the TRUST model designed by Judith E. Glaser¹.

- **T**ransparency and trust building are practiced
- **R**elationships are valued, developed, and sustained
- **U**nderstanding is gained through shared views and aspirations
- **S**uccess is an acknowledgement of contributions made by all
- **T**ruth is communicated with candor and caring

Merely seeing these words may not be enough to materialize in your brain the images and the feelings of trust. In fact, our brain requires us to experience the feelings of trust, before we are able to trust.

Once we establish and internalize the feelings of trust it leads to richer collaboration and higher performance. So let's take the plunge and explore why your brain needs to experience trust in order to perform well in the workplace.

The brain is where trust lives or dies. According to Angelika Dimoka, Temple University, Fox School of Business, distrust takes place in the lower brain (the Amygdala and Limbic areas) and trust takes place in the higher brain (the Prefrontal Cortex).

Judith explains, "Our Prefrontal Cortex 'makes movies' of our aspirations, expectations, and interpretations of reality. When we communicate with others in ways that makes us fearful, sad, depressed, upset, or angry ... there is a good chance something in our conversation has triggered our pain chemistry ... which in turn triggers and over stimulates excess supplies of dopamine ... our fight and flight reflexes, increased levels of norepinephrine and cortisol (stress hormones), testosterone (aggression hormone) and/or steroids, which stimulate muscles or enhance physical strength; we are no longer living in a positive, happy movie of the future. We are hijacked by fear."

¹ Judith E. Glaser, founder of the Creating WE Institute and a three-time bestselling author, and global thought leader regarding the neuroscience of leadership and corporate culture.

Now, do you remember a time when you felt betrayed? Perhaps you received a performance review that did not meet your expectations, or maybe a co-worker took credit for your award-winning ideas, or you didn't get the promotion you deserved because the boss' son was hired instead of you.

If you cannot relate to any of those scenarios, think of a time that you were not chosen for something that you really wanted to be part of, or when you lost something of value. You will probably never forget that event; it is likely that you will remember every minute detail, every word that was exchanged, and every person that ever did you wrong! Remember those feelings? The hurt! The betrayal, the anger, and the rage! When you think of it, your brain takes you back to the very moment of contact in which you felt that enormous sense of mistrust! It's as though you were watching a movie of that incident and it endlessly replays just as YOU remember it!

In fact, you are watching a movie! Your brain does record every pain that you ever experienced – physical and emotional! And, as you watch your “brain movie,” **your brain emits the same neurochemicals that were released in the actual situation.**

There is good news! **Just as we can hold on to bad feelings and negative emotions, our brain has the enormous capacity to capture and hold onto the good feelings that we experience.** Just as the negative feelings are captured by our “brain camera,” so too are the positive and euphoric moments eternalized – at least, neurologically.

Researcher, Paul Zak, Ph.D. from the Claremont Graduate University, senior author of the “Trust Hormone Associated with Happiness”, suggests that oxytocin could be the most prevalent hormone in the heart and the brain, and [oxytocin] may be the critical driving force behind our need for social contact.”

VITAL HUMAN NEEDS: PROTECT-CONNECT-BELONG-BE STRONG-PARTNER

From Protect to Connect & Belong: Human beings have vital needs. Humans crave connection with other humans. When we are hurt, we retreat into protect behavior. For us to re-connect, we need to be shown sympathy, empathy, and understanding in order to settle down, lick our wounds, and move on.



From our earliest years, when we fall down after attempting to take our first steps, we seek comfort from those who nurture and care for us.

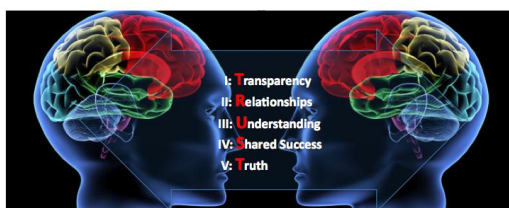
When we are teenagers and our emotional wounds need healing, we continue to seek comfort from our peers. We seek to fit in, to belong, to be liked, admired, and even revered. That's because **the positive connections with others help us to subdue our fears, manage our stress, and think and act more productively and creatively.**

We Need to Feel Strong and Partner: In our careers, when we have success for the good work we do, for our climb up the career ladder, or for our great achievements in our professions, we need others to appreciate our efforts and to see our contributions as valuable.

And in all of these trust-building circumstances, when we are cuddled, nurtured, praised, and adored, our brain secretes oxytocin – as well as other neurochemicals such as serotonin and dopamine.

That's right! **When we receive sincere praise, acknowledgment, and support from others**, and when we believe that someone else trusts in our abilities, our brain emits positive neurochemicals, which **increase our motivation to continue to do good work and even take more risks** – perhaps to express innovation and creativity.

Mindshifts for Building Trust



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There is much more to learn about the brain and neurotransmission beyond the scope of this article. But, it is important to grasp is that **our brain responds to both negative and positive connections with others by emitting neurochemicals, based on whether or not trust is present.**

When trust is present, you can expect to see an increase in confidence, production, accuracy, collaboration, innovation, and generally good vibes among the workforce. So the big question is: What can you do to create a culture of trust?

Here are several ideas that you can easily implement based on Judith's TRUST model:

TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST BUILDING ARE PRACTICED CONSISTENTLY

- Start with the hiring process, create clear and accurate job descriptions and expectations for success and communicate with transparency to your candidates
- Create a performance review model that clearly identifies levels of excellence in performance; then, openly communicate benchmarks for success to your employees
- Provide support in the form of training and mentoring to help each person reach excellence
- Create learning opportunities, and provide encouragement and compassion for the learning process rather than criticism and judgment
- Provide a process for establishing accountability throughout the organization; create guidance for aligning words, actions, and deeds
- Encourage and have conversations that promote transparency and trust

RELATIONSHIPS ARE VALUED, DEVELOPED, & SUSTAINED

- Decide on the core values that will guide your organization's actions and agreements with and between leaders, employees, vendors, and customers
- Encourage and have conversations that demonstrate the value of the relationships
- Ensure each person feels that they 'belong' and have a role in the organization or team
- Establish and practice 'rules of engagement' in relationships and in meetings that foster open, candid, and caring conversations
- Learn to give feedback when relationships go off track – so that you can bring them back on track

UNDERSTANDING IS GAINED THROUGH SHARED VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS

- Listen to connect, not to reject
- Make it a practice to ask for and listen to feedback from peers, employees, vendors, customers, competitors, and others who may not agree with your perspective and points of view
- Consciously form work teams with people of different backgrounds, thought processes, experience levels, ages, and viewpoints
- Allow people to be “fully expressed” through speaking, writing, and/or demonstrating their abilities
- Make it a practice to ask “what if?” questions that open the doors to new ways of thinking without pre-judging the ideas of others that may be different than your own

SUCCESS IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY ALL

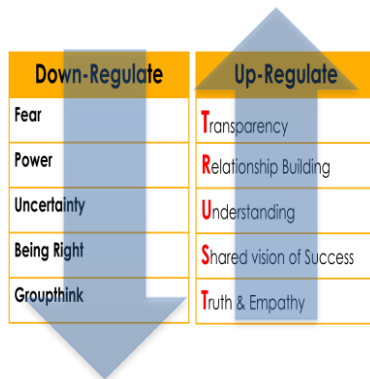
- Initiate conversations about mutual success and ‘what success looks like for each of us’
- Encourage people at all levels to communicate and discuss the shared view of success with others
- Encourage all people and all levels to take ownership for their areas of contribution
- Reward people for stepping outside of their area of responsibilities to lend a hand or be a sounding board for others in the pursuit of achieving mutual success
- Celebrate the successes large and small
- Acknowledge the value of everyone on the team

TRUTH IS COMMUNICATED WITH CANDOR & CARING

- Acknowledge that your truth may not be the only truth
 - Help others see that their truth may not be the only truth
 - Keep an open mind of discovery in the pursuit of truth – there are more than one truths
 - When gaps appear between ‘your truth and my truth’ discuss them with an intention of creating bridges of understanding
 - Hold and encourage conversations that start with empathy and move toward a common goal or outcome
 - Speak and show appreciation to others for their efforts and successes
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HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN TRUST IS PRESENT IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

Before you attempt to spread random acts of trust across your organization, we suggest that you and your company's management team think carefully about what a trusting organization will look like and feel like.



Down-Regulate	Up-Regulate
Fear	Transparency
Power	Relationship Building
Uncertainty	Understanding
Being Right	Shared vision of Success
Groupthink	Truth & Empathy

- Create an Alignment process for building your **Trust Map** with the contributions of everyone in the organization.
- Engage people to think together and collaborate in the design process, and facilitate open exchange of ideas and perspectives.
- Decide what changes you would like to implement and how you will do that.
- Create an **Accountability Matrix** for the **Trust Journey**, and determine who will be accountable for the changes and how.
- Develop metrics for success, and design a process for measuring and sharing your success.

Creating a trusting workplace is one of the most exhilarating and powerful processes that an organization can experience. This process will help you establish your own trust model and build a foundation of trust that will guide your interactions with your fellow employees, your customers, your vendors and even your competitors. The result is higher levels of productivity, and sustained focus toward achieving extraordinary goals.

Let us help you! **TeamWide Solutions**, in collaboration with the Creating WE Institute has the experience, knowledge, and tools to help you and your management team transform your trust-less organization into a trust-full organization that achieves dynamic results.

Please contact TeamWide Solutions at info@teamwidesolutions.com or 704-542-4226. Or visit our website at www.teamwidesolutions.com.