



From The Library Of
Marnie McNamara
www.primaryrelationship.com

10 Crucial and Surprising Steps to Build Trust in a Relationship

By Dr. Robert Huizenga

1. Be predictable. When do seeds of suspicion emerge? When one begins to think, What's up? Why is he doing that? He's never done that before. That is so unlike him. He loses 30 pounds, buys a new wardrobe and comes home late from work. He changes his patterns. His behavior becomes unpredictable. You get the picture? Any movement away from predictable behavior can become suspect and trust can deteriorate. Focus on acting predictably if you need to build trust. Be consistent in what you do. This doesn't mean you must be boring. If there is a twinkle in your eye and a dose of spontaneity every so often, for goodness sakes be spontaneous and fun loving. But, be spontaneous consistently! Be true to who you have always been and be that consistently, whoever you tend to be!
2. Inform your significant other when you become "unpredictable." No one goes through life the same person. We all make shifts and changes. Frankly sometimes we may be fairly clueless about what is happening and where we are going. Those times may be very intense and we do some silly things or make some downright dumb decisions. Life can get very squirrely and unpredictable. (I have a favorite phrase: Gold is refined through intense heat.) Growth in an individual, marriage or family often is accompanied by a little chaos. Welcome these shifts, for there is a part of you searching for something better / different / richer / deeper, but for heaven's sake, inform your partner of what you are experiencing. Say, "I really don't know what is going on in me right now, but I'm moving in a different direction. Be a little patient with me while I figure this out. I might do some silly things, but my intent is not to harm you or scare you. Accept some of my wondering and wandering and please be there for me? I may need to run some of this by you every so often!"
3. Make sure your words match the message. Mean what you say and say what you mean. When your partner hears one thing in your words but your tone of voice, body language and facial expressions are really saying something else, you open the relationship to some crazy making days. Which message is she to believe? This can waste a tremendous amount of energy and she learns not to trust part of what you are saying. Here's a very simple but common example. You are getting ready to go to a formal dinner. Your wife comes to you and says, "How do I look?" (And she's wearing a dress you don't particularly like and her hair is pulled back in a way that turns you off.) Not to spoil the evening you enthusiastically say, "You look great." You don't really mean it and a part of her knows you really don't mean it. But, you leave it at that. This might not seem like a big deal - we all have done something similar - but if trust is shaky to begin with, it is even shakier now. Here's how to match the words with the nonverbal: "I think you are a beautiful person. I want you to know that. I love you dearly and it will be wonderful to have you by my side tonight. Others will see your beauty. (As you say this,

you look into her eyes as you put your hands around her waist.) She's not concerned so much with how she looks but is expressing a need for affirmation. She's not talking about her dress or hair, but about wanting to know the evening is going to go just fine. You respond to the real message. You can take this one step further, if you like. At some point you might bring up her need for affirmation and talk about that. Ask her is there is anything you can say or do so that need is met. Trust is awareness of the intent beneath the obvious message and responding to that!

4. Believe the other person is competent. I hear this phrase very often: "But, I don't want to hurt him." A couple things are at play here. First, she may not have the skill of confronting the other with the truth in a way that brings reconciliation and understanding. She believes truth telling is destructive or entails some sort of drama. Neither is true. The truth is never destructive and can be conveyed in loving ways. (With that said, what we believe to be the truth may indeed be a distorted perception that fits our personal needs.) Or, she may see the other person as a wimp; someone she believes cannot handle rigorous personal confrontation. She doesn't trust that the other person has the internal strength or stamina or skills to be in a relationship of mutual respect and equality. The other person picks up on this mistrust and does what he does (feigns inadequacy and incompetence) to avoid the personal confrontation as well. A dance is acted out. Believe and know in your heart that the other person, somewhere and somehow, beneath the games, has the internal strength and capacity to handle anything. Such trust builds trust in the other person and begins to pervade the relationship. "Hey, she thinks I can handle this! Hmmm, this is mighty good! I CAN engage her and be truly intimate!"

5. Be very very careful of keeping secrets. If he knows there is an elephant in the room and doesn't talk about it, the elephant takes up tremendous space in the relationship. It takes energy for him to walk around it. She may not see the elephant but knows he is bending his neck to look around something. She will be curious, mildly disturbed, have feelings but no words to wrap around them, might wonder if something is wrong with her or struggle with trusting her intuition (her intuition KNOWS an elephant is there.) And, when we can't trust the messages that come from within us, we find it very difficult to trust the messages of the other person. Secrets demand tremendous energy and erode trust. The relationship is doomed never to experience wall-banging intimacy. This is why extramarital affairs are so damaging. She is not so much concerned about him having sex with someone else as she is about the betrayal, lack of trust, the secrets and deception that are crazy making and energy draining. Now, please. I'm not saying that you sit your partner down and divulge the 23 secrets of your illicit past behaviors. If you have resolved those, i.e. forgiven yourself, understand those behaviors, learned from them and were able to use them to make the internal shifts necessary for your personal development, they do not qualify as an elephant. Hopefully, in the course of growing intimacy in your relationship you may want to share some of those events as you disclose to your partner where you were and where you are now. You do so without emotional charge. However, if a secret takes up room, i.e. still has an emotional charge and holds you back from disclosing more and more of yourself in the growing stages of intimacy, you have a problem that needs to be addressed with your partner.

6. Let YOUR needs be known - loudly. Be a little - no, be a lot - self-centered. (Be self-centered, but not selfish!) Here's a problem I run into almost every day. He is backing away (perhaps attached to work, another person, etc.). She feels the trust and intimacy eroding, is scared and wants to "win him back." So she begins an all out effort to "work on the marriage." She invites him to do so as well. He may reluctantly agree. She blasts full throttle ahead trying to "be nice" and meet every need he ever said he had. She's going to "fill his tank with goodies." Doesn't work. Her eyes are riveted on him. He feels "smothered" or maybe even resentful: "Why is she

doing this NOW!" She's hopeful, but eventually that turns to resentment. Her underlying motive - if I meet his needs, he will feel good and meet mine - just doesn't work. It's perceived as manipulation, which it is. Of course, he doesn't say anything. After all, how do you get angry with someone who is so "nice and caring?" Trust disintegrates under a blanket of quiet niceties. Start with your eyes focused on YOU. What do YOU need? Explore your personal need system. Dig beneath the surface. And then say to him: "I need...x, y and z. I would like to talk to you about them. I would like us to work out a way so my needs are met. Are you open to that?" He is empowered to say yes or no. Or, he may say, "What about my needs?" You respond, "I am very interested in hearing what is important to you, certainly." Have you ever been around someone who stated clearly what they needed/wanted? Didn't you respect that person? Because you knew where he stood, and therefore where you stood, didn't that interaction move toward a trusting relationship?

7. State who YOU are - loudly. It is very sad to see those in relationships of emotional investment hold back from letting the other person know who they really are. You build trust in a relationship by entrusting your SELF to the other person. This sounds easy but I find it difficult for most to pull off. Most of us have a difficult time declaring our SELF. For one thing, if you're like most of us, you haven't given much thought to what it is that makes YOU truly YOU. Don't you feel like you glide through life on autopilot, focusing on tasks, goals, accomplishments, problems and the external realities? Don't you tend to focus on those things out there or that person out there? You're concerned about what he is thinking, how he is responding to you, whether he likes you, whether he will be an obstacle and where he will fit in your life? Your conversations may be pleasant but fairly superficial and bluntly, boringly inane. You converse about things/relationships/events out there. You are reluctant to share your thoughts, values, and impressions or take a stand. This doesn't destroy trust. But it doesn't create it either. And, if you do take a stand it may serve the purpose of protecting you or entrenching you as you react against someone. This more often than not creates trust barriers. Take some time to reflect on your standards. What are your standards for a relationship? What standards do you hold for yourself? What do you order your life around? What are the 4 top values in your life? What are some themes that you live by? What are you known for? And then...begin letting significant people in your life know. They will respect you. They will know you more deeply. They will thank you for the opportunity to know you. They will see you as a person of character. They will trust you. They can count on you. They know exactly what is behind and within you.

8. Learn to say NO! Sometimes you need to say NO! Often it is crucial to say NO! Saying NO sets boundaries around you that protects you from being hurt or venturing into territory that will be destructive to your heart and soul. You draw a line. You stop tolerating that which drains energy and makes you less than YOU. You refuse to allow the destructive behaviors of others to destroy you. You build a moat around the core of your life. You do this by informing the other person of what they are doing. You request they stop. If they don't stop, you demand they stop. If they don't stop you walk away without a snide remark, eye-roll or comment. To some this seems harsh, but saying NO is RESPECTED. Fear is the basis of mistrust. If you fear that someone will hurt you and believe you have no recourse but to endure that hurt, fear will prevail. How can you trust when you are in fear? Saying NO, protecting yourself, sends a message to the other person that you will not live in fear. This usually triggers a response of respect from the other person. After all, if you can protect yourself and refuse subjugation to that which is destructive, will not the other person come to trust you and see you as a person who just might protect him/her from harm as well?

9. Charge Neutral. When your significant other expresses something powerfully, charge neutral. Most of us are afraid of strong feelings or points of contention in a relationship. I commonly hear people respond by defending themselves (to a perceived attack), explaining themselves, counter-attacking, shutting down, or walking away. Of course, the relationship remains stuck in this quagmire of mistrust and fear. Rather than reacting and having your feelings flowing all over the place or shutting down, practice charging neutral. Communicate calmness, not only in your tone of voice but also in how you carry your body. Don't speak with a charge to your voice. Control your voice! Say what you must say, state the truth and do it directly and calmly. You can do this, once you master your fears. It will dramatically change the flow of the relationship. You will be able to point out something big, without making a big deal out of it. You will be in control of you. This not only feels great, but your partner trusts that you won't fly or fall apart. You will experience your personal power. This makes you very attractive. Don't people really trust someone who knows their personal power and how to use it for the welfare of themselves and others? Your partner will love the fact that she can trust you consistently to operate from your "quiet center," remain engaged, not back down and speak the truth with conviction and calmness.

10. Dig into the dirt. Relationships of emotional investment, by their nature, bring trials, tribulations, fears, chaos, turmoil, change, stretching and growth. They become the grist from which your life is shaped and formed. Be fearless when faced with turmoil, upset, crisis, questions, and fears. When the time is right, seek them out. Move toward the frightening unknown. Dig into the dirt of your relationship and uncover the treasures. Do you really TRUST that this can happen? The purpose of your relationship is not to make you happy. Do you realize this? Happiness may be an outcome, but your other is given to you to move you to where you really want to be. Obstacles, trials and moments of pain are given as lessons on which you intentionally write the script of your life individually and together. Embrace the difficult. Trust that in this embracing you will find more of your true self. Trust that you are given the resources and capacity to face what you and your significant other are to face. Once you are able to believe and trust these ultimate purposes, trusting your significant other will be that much more easy.

Dr. Robert Huizenga, The Infidelity Coach, has helped hundreds of couples over the past two decades heal from the agony of extramarital affairs and survive infidelity. Visit his website at: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com>

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Dr._Robert_Huizenga

For more articles and information, return to: <http://www.primaryrelationship.com/library.htm>
I help your primary relationship flourish so all of your relationships will blossom.