Who do you Trust?

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Who do you trust? Your first and immediate answer ought to be: I trust myself! However, that has not been my experience. When asking executives that question they most often say a family member, close friend, or colleague. Too often we do not think of our-self first.

"Self-trust is the first secret to success" noted R.W. Emerson. Leaders know themselves. Their self-trust is the first step when responding to basic human questions of 'who am I' (Authority) and 'where am I going' (Responsibility). Leaders know themselves, and they know where they are going. They understand that a healthy response requires clear and accurate self-concept and high self-esteem. In popular terms it has been said: "knowing yourself + loving yourself = trusting yourself". If you cannot trust yourself, how can you trust others? If you do not trust yourself, how can you expect others to trust you?

Remember: Self-trust is knowing yourself and caring for yourself. What are you doing to clarify your self-concept? Do you see yourself as your colleagues see you? Do you have the expertise necessary to be successful? Are you aware of your potential blind-spots? What are you doing to increase your self-esteem? Are you proud of your professional expertise? Do unconditionally accept your whole self? Do you acknowledge your vulnerabilities?

The first person you need to trust is yourself. No one can be as consistently supportive of you as you can learn to be to yourself. Being kind to yourself increases self-confidence and lessens your need for external approval. High self-esteem and caring for yourself increases self-trust. What kindness have you done for yourself today?

Self-trust is a learned skill – and only you can learn it – it cannot be given to you. Learning to know yourself and develop high esteem for who you are is acquired as you grow. Learning to rely on your inner resources (i.e. emotional, mental and physical) to navigate the world is a life-long awakening. As C.G. Jung stated: "Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens." Self-trust requires introspection, reflection, exploration of self as completely as possible.

We are not born with self-trust. Rather as infants we are highly dependent and require high trust in others. Self-trust needs to be learned as we mature – often a difficult lesson as trust in others is disrupted or broken. As we realize that we are likely to be betrayed by others at some point, the least likely person to betray us is our-self.

Self-trust is not static. An unfortunate reality is that self-trust is often challenged. Self-doubt, skepticism, questioning self, frequents everyone's mind. Therefore, self-trust needs to be learned, nurtured, and sustained. When diminished or lost, it needs to be re-established.

Self-trust is not arrogance or conceit. It is born of knowing yourself and respecting the person you are. It is guided by your values and humbled by the mission you are living.

Self-trust unlocks the doorway of creative freedom and personal truth. Nurture it:
1. Ensure your self-concept is accurate. Know who you are. Establish mindful self-monitoring approaches. Within you will find the essence of your personal vision.
2. Articulate your values and mission in life. Acknowledge your limitations and areas of vulnerability. Beware of your blind spots.
3. Create a ritual, life pattern, and/or tradition, which sustains your self-trust and re-constitutes it when haunted by self-doubt, skepticism, and questions.
4. Commit to routinely caring for your self-trust.
5. Practice trusting yourself by extending yourself beyond your usual risk parameters.
6. Celebrate your success, the process that you are living, who you are, and who you are becoming.

The bottom line is: If you want to be trusted, learn to trust yourself first. Trust what makes you authentic. Trust that which you claim as your authority. "Trust that which gives you meaning and accept it as your guide". ~ C.G. Jung.

If you find some truth or guidance here, please let me know. Resonant trust is an on-going process. I would like to include you.