

My topic is: discuss
the concept of trust in
personal and
professional
relationships...



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Discuss the Concept of “ Trust” in Personal and Professional Relationships

Introduction: Humans are social animals, and as a result relationships between individuals develop in all spheres of human activity. There are personal and professional spheres of activity, and hence relationships develop in both these spheres of human activity. Trust is one element in relationships in the personal and professional spheres of activity.

The Concept of Trust:

While there is apparent agreement that trust is an essential part of human relationship, perceptions differ on what it means. There is the assumption that trust is an interpersonal adhesive that holds people together, and the greater the trust the greater the bonding of the people in a society. There is the misconception of trust in personal relationships, in that it is an attitude of unquestioning acceptance that can be taken for granted. This is similar to the trust that the blind trust that a child reposes in the parents. Moving on to business relationship there is a similar misconception in that trust reposes in meeting contractual agreements, and all that goes with it. In the modern world that is dense with uncertainties, it is trust that enables to find a clear path. (Tools for Personal Growth).

Lewicki & Wiethoff (2000), provide a description of trust as “ an individuals belief in, and willingness to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another”. Trust is reposed by one individual in another based on three elements. The first of these elements is ingrained in the personality of the individual by the belief system of the individual that evolves through the experience that the individual has had with respect to trust. The second element is based on the set of rules and norms that have been established within the society that the individual lives in, within the organization that the

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individual works in, or the profession that the individual belongs to. The third element on which trust is based is the experience that the individual may have had within a relationship. If the experience has been good trust is more easily given, and if the experience is bad, trust is got with difficulty. Trust is a factor in personal, as well as professional relationships of an individual. Personal relationships have a greater relevance in the social or emotional arena, and are focused on the relationship itself, while professional relationships occur in the workplace, and are task-related and aimed at achieving objectives.

Lewicki & Wiethoff (2000), divide trust into two types which they call “calculus based trust” (CBT), and “identification-based trust” (IBT). IBT is witnessed in personal relationships, and may be sometimes seen in the professional arena too. IBT occurs as a result of the understanding of the expectations of the other, and the development of the capacity of this in a given situation, whereby it becomes possible to act on behalf of each other in a given situation. Such trust develops among individuals with the same common values, and has an outlook that is of mutual benefit, which could lead finally to a common identity. CBT is workplace oriented with its reward and punishment environment. The value in attaining an objective is not seen as a personal satisfaction, but is rather related to the consequences of achieving it. Trust is a very slow step by step development in CBT, not necessarily always in the forward direction (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000).

Conclusion:

Trust though a small word has a much deeper meaning than is the normal conception. It has implications in the belief an individual has in another, and the willingness to act merely on the words, actions, and decisions of another

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individual in whom belief is reposed.

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