



Self-Worth – Relationships and Trust

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Trust is a key factor in any interaction in life. Whether it be with family and friends, or institutions like banks or our GP, we are asked to trust them to look after our best interests. Trust is the basis on which all relationships are formed. Trust in another person gives us support, eases loneliness and can offer opportunities for growth. When trust is broken, it might lead a person to question what previously had seemed safe and secure. Breaking someone's trust can destroy personal and professional relationships, and harm self-worth.

Trusting yourself

To trust in others, a person often needs to know how much they trust themselves first. When a person trusts themselves, they're likely to have confidence in their decision-making abilities and their overall ability to take care of themselves. People who trust themselves know the following about themselves:

- I know I'm a worthy person.
- I know I make good and reasonable decisions.
- I know I've made mistakes, but I've learned from them.
- I try to keep every confidence that's shared with me.
- I prefer to make my own choices, rather than go with the flow.
- I understand that I can do little to change my past.
- My self-talk is mostly positive.
- I don't feel I have to prove myself to others.
- I know when to speak up.
- I don't self-sabotage or catastrophise.
- I keep commitments to myself and others.
- I can process my hurt when I've been wronged and find a way to move on.

Trusting others

Not everyone trusts themselves, but learning to trust can make life more fulfilling. However, it can feel daunting as trust means allowing ourselves to be emotionally vulnerable and hope that others won't take advantage of us. We can't demand the trust of another, it must be freely given. Someone with low self-worth may project their prior experiences with trust onto others. This can lead to troubled relationships, as fear starts to determine how much they trust another. This lack of trust can become a pattern in relationships, as a fear of losing trust can stop us from moving forward in life.



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Lying

If you've experienced a lack of trust, there's likely been one key behaviour at the core of it – lying. Once a person has been caught lying, everything changes. It can be difficult to believe anything a person says again after a lie. For people with low self-worth, it can cause them to question everything they know about their partner or friend or family member.

Why do people lie?

People who've had their trust broken by lies often want to know the reason why they were lied to. Here are some common motivators:

- Avoiding humiliation or shame
- Avoiding punishment
- To obtain benefit
- To win admiration
- The thrill of it
- Because they can't stop.

While a liar may seem to believe in the legitimacy of their reason for lying, the person who has been lied to will likely find the reasons to be nothing more than excuses. A lie is an act of betrayal. The liar seeks to control another person's narrative by spinning a fantasy for their own edification. Often, feelings of hurt, anger, frustration, confusion and betrayal can overwhelm the target of the lies. In a relationship, everything can suddenly be tainted with suspicion.

Infidelity

Infidelity is a sign that a relationship is likely on the verge of breaking down. It's often accompanied with lies, as a person strives to hide their illicit relationship from their partner. As with lying, a person might want to know the reason why they were cheated on. Here are some common motivators:

- A lack of sexual satisfaction
- A desire for more sex
- No emotional satisfaction
- Falling out of love
- Falling in love with someone new
- Curiosity
- Revenge.



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Infidelity is a disrespectful act that can cause untold harm to someone's self-worth. A big factor in infidelity is lying. A person going outside their committed relationship is making a conscious choice when they choose not to tell their partner the truth. An accountable person shares their unhappiness with their relationship before breaking the trust of their partner.

Broken trust

The effect of broken trust on a person is harmful to self-worth. The weight of emotions can make it feel like a person is drowning, with every thought and action under scrutiny. Every situation might feel like a catastrophe. Here are a few reasons why lies and infidelity in a relationship cause pain.

- The deeper love, the more hurtful the pain.
- Our partner is not the person we thought they were.
- Our relationship has suddenly become a lie.
- The foundation of trust and security has been destroyed.
- No story is true. How many other lies have been told?
- We feel totally and utterly rejected.
- We don't know the real reasons why it happened, which leaves us confused.
- We can't accept the reasons given, as they don't make sense in our world view.

Continuing a relationship with someone untrustworthy

Staying in a relationship full of lies and infidelity is unhealthy. Take the time to assess the effects of broken trust and ask yourself whether it can ever be rebuilt. Communication is essential in this time, as there is no quick fix for this issue. An apology is start (when it's authentic), but acting in a trustworthy manner and treating others as wished to be treated is usually the best way to proceed. If that's unlikely to happen, then reassess whether this is the relationship for you. Look to yourself for answers, including how much you trust yourself to look after your own best interests.

Building trust

Forgiveness is not something that necessarily comes easily after trust has been broken. Time and ongoing trustworthy behaviour is usually what's required to start to get things moving again. Remember, a loss of trust caused by the actions of another person is a betrayal. This can take time to heal. A person who was harmed by a loss of trust may be trying to rebuild their self-worth, as they grapple with feeling like a fool and doubting themselves for allowing themselves to be lied to.



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However, we can encourage trust by:

- Being a good listener
- Supporting the people around us
- Respecting boundaries
- Keeping confidences
- Being dependable
- Doing as we say we'll do
- Sharing and encouraging a tight bond.

Where to get help

Always remember you are not alone. Your doctor or registered health professionals are there to help you.

Our online resource page also has a full list of organisations where you can get further information. <http://mindshift.org.au/suggested-links/>.

Things to remember

In an ideal world, trust should be a given. However, once it's been lost it can be rare to regain it. Trust is earned and requires time and ongoing trustworthy behaviour.

In Summary

Trust is a key element of self-worth, with the ability to trust ourselves paramount. When we trust ourselves and our decision-making abilities, we're better able to look after ourselves and avoid putting ourselves in situations where we're open to hurt.

However, broken trust can happen to anyone. It might come from being lied to or cheated on, and it doesn't matter who we are, the pain is the same for everyone. A healthy relationship will be free of lies and infidelity, with ongoing efforts made to be trustworthy by both partners. Open communication and respect are key elements in trust.

Updates and Further information

For the latest updates and further information please visit www.mindshift.org.au.



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Our Mission

It is our mission to ensure that every person has access to the resources available to build healthy self-worth, to have a positive sense of self, and to find meaning in life.

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