

Trust and Communication (Posted 22.07.2021)

What comes first in a relationship?

Trust or Communication?

What breaks down first in a relationship?

Trust or Communication?

I would love to hear your answers.

TRUST AND COMMUNICATION ARE NECESSARY TO HAVE STRONG RELATIONSHIPS. Some of us trust too easily, some of us do not trust at all. Some of us are afraid to trust. Some of us communicate well, some of us stumble at what we have to say, some of us have a problem getting across what it is we really WANT to say, we make mistakes in how we communicate, giving everyone the wrong idea or we end up communicating the wrong thoughts, the message given is not the message received.

Let me just say that in a world where social media dictates a lot of what we do, we do not clearly communicate with one another with physical words, we speak via text messages, WhatsApp's, and the odd photo or emoji.

Wife "I left you four brownies"

Husband "what??? Who is Brownie?"

Wife "No you idiot! I left you four brownies that I baked today. Please eat them"

Are we really communicating? How easy is it to misunderstand what someone is saying to you on a text or what's app? How easy is it to miss-read verbal tone in a text? Especially if you are naturally prone to being paranoid or have automatic thinking you will find yourself wondering if someone is possibly angry with you, ignoring you, not taking you seriously. You will find your mind going around all over the place.

Actually!! You may find yourself setting the tone yourself. You may be wrong.

In order to be clear, we need to ask directly for what we want and we need to communicate verbally with one another, and we must learn how to stop making assumptions about everything.

I have worked for many years in the field of addiction and at one of my support groups I asked the group “How do you communicate with someone who is in active addiction?” The answer was quite loud and quite firm “YOU CAN’T”

Since leaving the rehab environment and dealing with people with issues other than addiction, I find that communication is the **BIGGEST** stumbling block for most people. Breakdown in communication; especially in relationships (ANY RELATIONSHIP) are breeding grounds for failure and the disintegration of that relationship.

Breakdowns in communication and breakdowns of trust.

EITHER OR..... It is hard to come back from it. It is hard to rebuild a relationship after either one of these is broken.



Everyone needs to feel understood, supported, and heard, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely. Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our relationships. The needs of **BOTH PARTIES** play important roles in the long-term success of most relationships, and each deserves respect and consideration.

In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in detachment, fights, and break-ups. When you can recognize the validity of conflicting needs and become willing to examine them in an environment of understanding and or empathy, it opens pathways to problem solving and improved relationships.

To get back to what I was saying about my support group and the “no – communication” with someone in active addiction. I realized then while listening to everyone in the group; that trust is a huge issue as well. There cannot be any trust without open communication and there cannot be open communication without trusting that what someone is telling you is sincere and truthful.

How do you begin to communicate and trust someone especially when they have hurt you very deeply? How do you trust someone again after they have let you down too many times to count?

The foundation of all healthy relationships is trust, but where does the responsibility of rebuilding trust lie? Usually rebuilding of trust should come from the person who has done wrong. **THAT DOES NOT ALWAYS HAPPEN.** Why? Because some people just cannot see their mistakes and when there is no remorse or acknowledgement of any wrong - doing, how can anything be repaired? Sometimes a person’s own truth is too strong to let go of and negotiate.

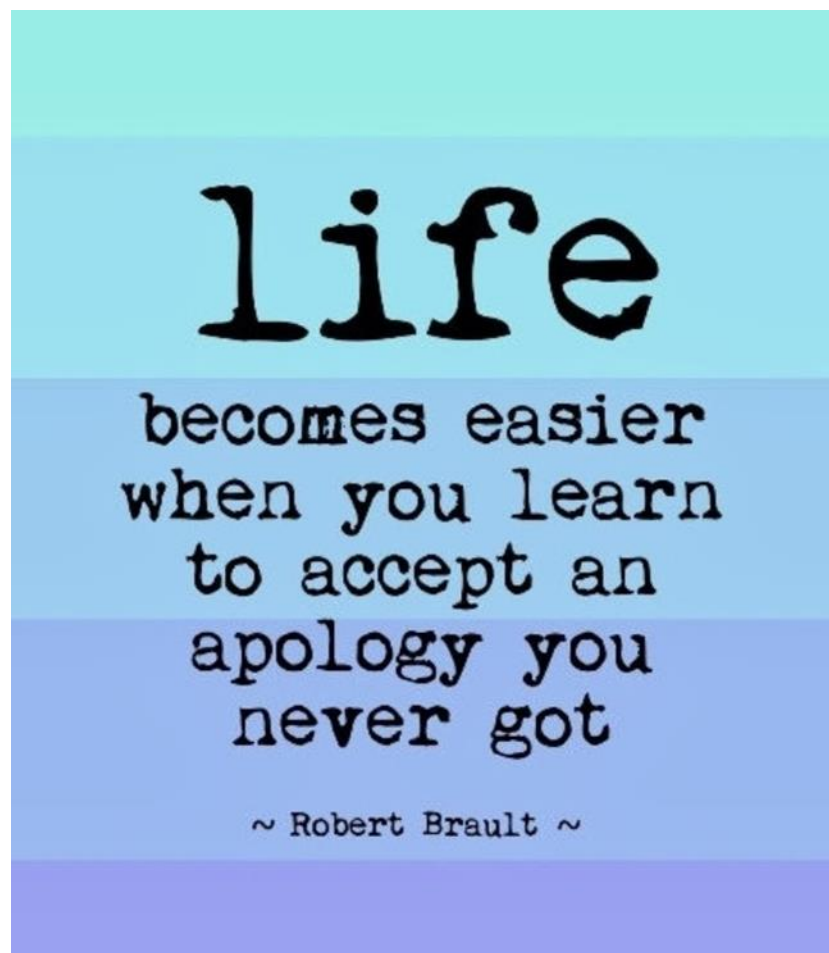
Mostly the feedback we get is that the “wrong-doer” must look within him/herself and understand all the “wrong they are doing”, the lies and the deceit came from within themselves to begin with after all; and they should realize that it will always be there, even if they are not doing anything wrong now, it may be sleeping (in remission, in recovery). The “wrong-doer” must focus inward, and this must be a continual process. This sounds like a great place to start. Unfortunately, I know personally that life just does not work this way.

In a perfect world the one who has hurt you should apologize, recognize their wrong doing so you can both move on.

Let us look at the above from a different perspective. It will happen that the “right-doer” should have to take a deep look within themselves and try to see all the wrongs that they have thus far tolerated. How much of this has the “right – doer” allowed? **THE “RIGHT-DOER” MUST ALSO FOCUS INWARD, AND THIS MUST BE A CONTINUAL PROCESS.**

We must start somewhere, and we must start now. We must start building in the right direction, even if it ends up being only for ourselves and only for our own peace of mind and growth. We must be constructive in what we do. We must do something constructive with the hurt and the pain we have possibly caused or maybe even been handed. THE WORK TO REPAIR A RELATIONSHIP MUST COME FROM BOTHE SIDES – IT CANNOT BE ONE SIDED AND BOTH PARTIES MUST BE WILLING TO DO THIS.

In a lot of relationships both parties would want to assign blame onto the other one. I want you to realize that this is futile and sends us in circles building resentment after resentment after resentment. We become bitter and twisted and remain bound to whoever has done us wrong. WE MUST WORK ON OURSELVES.



HOW DO WE DO THIS THEN?

WE MUST LEARN TO MASTER CONFLICT

This has to come from BOTH sides; conflict needs to be mastered by both parties.

Both parties need to learn how to respond instead of react to one another.

Both parties must make sure that the message given is the message received. There is nothing wrong if you have to confirm with the words “are you saying? Am I hearing you correctly? What do you mean?” instead of jumping to conclusions.

Remember that there is common ground here – the common ground is that you want to repair the relationship. When in conflict with someone for example over what to have for lunch, you want macaroni and cheese and he or she wants a burger, realize that the common ground or want here is LUNCH and somebody will have to compromise. Realize that you both want the same thing FOOD!

When there is conflict in a relationship, both parties must abandon the concept of winning or losing and try to adopt the mindset of resolution. It does not help to go into a conflict situation thinking to yourself that you are going to lose this argument or feeling arrogant enough, thinking that you are going to win.

ACHIEVING COMMITMENT

What you say you are going to do, do it. Don't make false or empty promises. If you cannot do something, then say that you can't. Making promises that you cannot keep just leaves you wide open for suspicion. BE CONSISTANT AND STAY TRUE TO YOUR WORD.

EMBRACE BEING ACCOUNTABLE

Come to terms with the fact that you will have to be held accountable to someone for your finances, for where you are going, for what you are doing, for who you are talking to, for your phone, for your friends, for everything actually. It's better to embrace this instead of kicking against it. It's better to just submit, if you have nothing to hide, then there should be no issues.

FOCUS ON RESULTS

It's better to set small goals than to set yourself up for failure, be clear about your goals and communicate them with your partner. One day at a time, one step at a time. Each and

every small victory is something to be proud of and something that needs to be given recognition. Encouragement on either side of the relationship is very important here. Strive for progress, not perfection.

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE PROPERLY?

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening and problem solving consists of:

Recognizing the other person, it avoids prejudice

Acceptance of the other person

Focuses on verbal and non – verbal messages

Active listening decodes the message and the return

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Reflective listening ensures that the message was understood

A message sent must be a message received – never assume

Active listening involves all of the senses: observe, listen to the tone of voice

Active listening observes body language and nonverbal communication

But remember that the more detail a person spends on irrelevant issues the more you can be sure that they may not be telling the truth

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communicating assertively means clearly and calmly expressing what you want without either being too passive or too aggressive. Learning to communicate assertively does not guarantee that you will have your needs met but it does make it more likely and it can improve your relationships with other people.

With assertive communication an individual expresses their needs and feelings in a way that also respects the rights of others. This mode of communication displays respect for each individual who is engaged in the exchange. Assertive communication listens without interruption, clearly states needs and wants, stands up for personal rights and makes good eye contact.

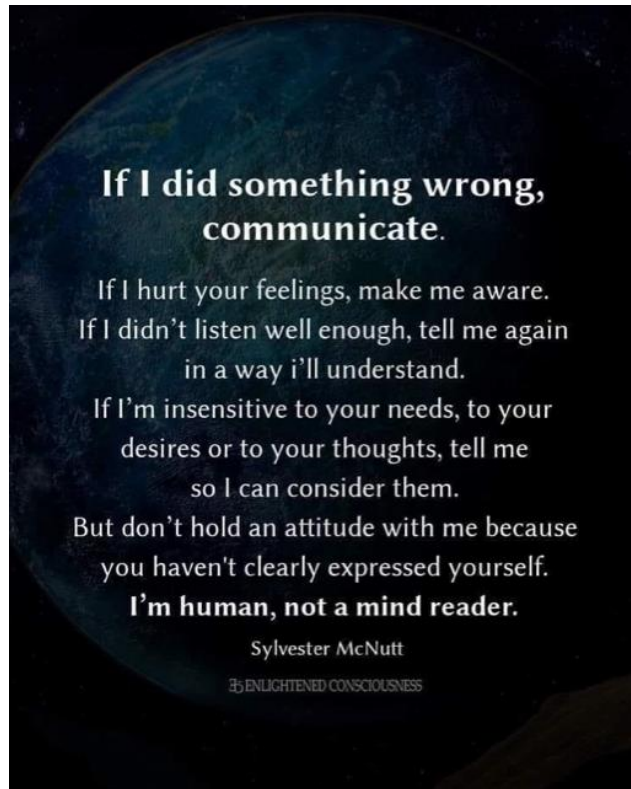
When a disagreement turns into personal insults, raised voices or mocking tones, the conversation is no longer productive. Be careful to focus on the problem without placing the blame on the other person. When a disagreement becomes personal, you should pause the conversation.

Most times during an argument we are only focused on getting our point across; we don't listen properly to the other person. Try restating what the other person has said in your own words before you respond. Make sure the message given is the message received. Make sure that the other person agrees that you understand what they are saying. Only then should you share your side. Once you have shared your side, the other person must reflect back at you so that you can understand that they get your point.

Use "I" statements: when sharing your concerns, begin your statement with "I" for example "I feel hurt when you don't tell me that you will be late" With this sentence format we show that we are taking responsibility for our own emotions instead of blaming someone else. The alternative would be "You never tell me you are going to be late" this type of statement is likely to cause the other person to become defensive.

Always know when it is time to walk away or take a "time out". When things start to become aggressive, argumentative and insulting – it's time to walk away. Do something to occupy your mind and to calm you down. Once both of you have calmed down you can return to sorting out the problem in a hospitable manner. You could even get a responsible person to mediate.

Disagreements are part of life. It's normal. Remember that when facing conflict it is always better to resolve the issue at hand. Do yourself a favor, don't go into a conflict situation with the idea that you are either going to win or lose, because then you have already lost! Go into a conflict situation with the mind set of resolving the problem. Resolve the problem and move along. Don't keep revisiting the past.



TRUST

HOW TO DO THIS

When we decide to trust someone in a relationship, there is a risk involved. That person may hurt us and there are no guarantees that they won't. If we have been hurt too often, we are generally not prepared to take the risk to trust again. It's also a dangerous situation to be in when we abandon all caution and trust anyone we come across in our lives blindly. We must train ourselves to reach some or another middle ground where trust is concerned. If someone has hurt you DEEPLY, It's not going to be easy to trust that person again and it will take the slightest misstep to cause the trust that you have built up to come crashing all the way down to the ground.

TO TRUST AGAIN IS A RISK AND IT IS A DECISION THAT WE NEED TO MAKE FOR OURSELVES. IT CANNOT BE FORCED. WE CANNOT BE MADE TO DO IT. IT WILL BE A SLOW PROCESS THAT WILL TAKE TIME.

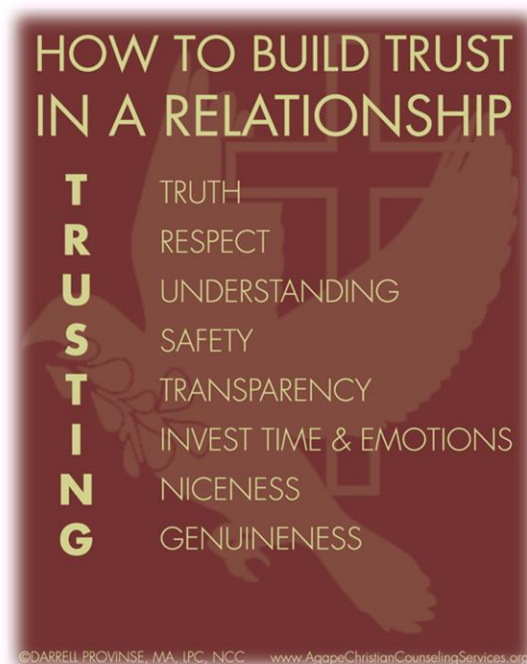


APPLY THE STOP GO SLOW TECHNIQUE AND DON'T RUSH INTO THINGS

ALWAYS PROCEED WITH CAUTION

REMEMBER THAT TRUST IS SOMETHING THAT IS BUILT TOGETHER

WHEN TRUST IS BUILT TOGETHER IT BECOMES A SAFE SPACE FOR BOTH PARTIES TO GROW AND TO BE THEMSELVES. TO LET DOWN THEIR GUARD.



TRUST IS ABOUT BEING UNDERSTOOD

TRUST IS BASED ON MOTIVE.

**THIS IS UNDERSTANDING A PERSON'S MOTIVE FOR SAYING NO.
TO EASILY ACCEPT SOMEONE ELSE'S NO – YOU MUST TRUST THAT PERSON.**

YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHY THEY HAVE SAID NO.

TRUST IS BASED ON CHARACTER

WHAT KIND OF CHARACTER TRAITS DOES THIS PERSON HAVE?

DO THEY LIE? DO THEY CHEAT? DO THEY STEAL? ARE THEY ABUSIVE?



TRUST IS BASED ON TRACK RECORD.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE?

BASED ON THE FACTS, CAN I TRUST YOU?

BASED ON THE HAPPENINGS OF THE PAST, CAN I TRUST YOU?

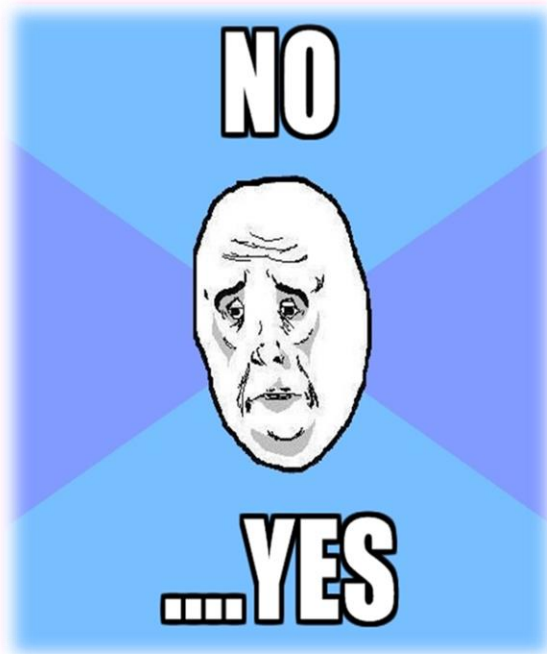
REMEMBER TO ALWAYS PROCEED WITH CAUTION

STOP / SLOW / GO

MAKE YOUR YES YOUR YES AND YOUR NO YOUR NO

BE HONEST WITH THE PEOPLE THAT LOVE YOU

TRUST BREAKS DOWN WHEN WE ARE NOT HONEST



LEARN TO TRUST YOURSELF AND TO TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT

WHAT CAN YOU TRUST YOURSELF WITH?

KNOW YOURSELF

EXAMINE YOUR HONESTY LEVEL

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result. If you keep going back to the same thing over and over again, that is self - sabotage! If it has not worked for you in the past why will it work now? What is going to be different from now on? Ask yourself why you are always making yourself vulnerable to untrustworthy people? Why are you always making yourself a slave to a substance or behavior? Is there something or someone that is preventing you from feeling better about yourself? Is it you? Are you your own worst enemy? What patterns do you notice about your behavior? Remember that that gut feeling is there for a reason. Listen to your inner voice, to your intuition. Realize that sometimes you may just be over sensitive, BUT CHECK THINGS OUT IN ANY CASE. Learn to discern good from evil.

Are you still the same person you were 10 years ago? People change, people grow, and addicts do get sober. But we cannot do this on the HOPE that a person has changed.... I hope he..... I hope sheI hope he or she has learnt their lesson. I hope that they are not going to do this again. Action is needed.....Stand back a bit and let that person show you (by action) that they have changed. What action has been taken to change?

Start slowly and take the wait and see approach. If they are unable to prove their ability then you need to take it back. Set up parameters, give freedom and then manage the relationship. Communication is key. We need to surround ourselves with the right people and relationships. We need information. What kind of information do you need to acquire to see change? We need to gain experience as we go. What are you prepared to put into practice? What are you prepared to try? Realize that you may also fail.....Finally you need some kind of structure to put into place.

What does your path to change look like?

I believe that everything happens for a reason. People change so that you can learn to let go, things go wrong so that you appreciate them when they're right, you believe lies so you eventually learn to trust no one but yourself, and sometimes good things fall apart so better things can fall together. ~Marilyn Monroe

