

The Weight We Must Carry

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“Trust is the glue of life. It’s the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It’s the foundational principle that holds all relationships” (Stephan Curry). Over the course of human existence we have built our way of life based on the foundation of trust, trust as Curry puts it is in fact the glue that holds society together. Great nations have been built purely on the concept of trust, when our leaders become untrustworthy that is when disaster tends to strike the hearts of our nations. In modern day as a society we must put a full and complete trust in our leaders to run great nations. As time passes, so long as trust grows, globally we will be able to complete great accomplishments. From astronauts flying to the moon: putting their trust in their engineers, to daily interactions like driving to work: one must put their trust not only in their own driving abilities but those around them. Trust is built on many key concepts: primarily including honesty, integrity, promise-keeping, and loyalty. Using these four ideas I would like to prove how trust is not only imperative locally but all the way up to a global level.

To set a precedent behind the gravity of trust one must look at how trust has become a prominent part of the world's history. The idea of trustworthiness must initially start at the basic levels being found within individuals. Looking back to even paleolithic times trust can be found within nearly all small communities, hunters and gatherers were entrusted with the task of scavenging for food and resources. Those who were injured or unable to fend for themselves were given aid by comrades and in return all they received was trust. Trust is such an interesting concept because for as long as humans have been evolving so has what trust is. In ancient Rome there was a word *Fiducia* that today can be translated to mean trust, yet back in ancient Rome it was used as a term for a contract. Almost like a loan today, I give you something and I trust you will return to me what I am owed. This is massively different from how complex trust has

become in modern days. Evolving forward we can look at times putting trust in others was critical for survival; one particular time being found in the 1820's-1860's. During this specific time period within the United States, a secret organization was founded in hopes to free slaves across the US: The Underground Railroad. Participating within the Railroad was treacherous with volunteers and slaves alike risking their lives for the basic human right of freedom. Every participating member was required to put their whole trust in those before them in order for the Railroad to be successful. With these ideas on the benefits of trust being shown throughout history there have been examples time and time again where trust was put in untrustworthy leaders. The most infamous example of this being in Germany during the 1930's: the reign of Adolf Hitler. As citizens we must put trust in leaders locally, nationwide, and within the globe; this is a necessity for our survival. Despite this, trustworthiness is the true test for a true leader. In 1933, Adolf Hitler rose to power as the chancellor of Germany, the people of Germany put their entire trust into their new leader, as history has proved Hitler lacked many key concepts behind trust. Hitler never sought out true justice, he only sought out his own form of justice; something far closer to revenge. These are obviously two very polarizing opposites of what one can do with trust, help or harm, it makes it incredibly easy to forget the foundation of trust in their most simplistic forms. It is through trustworthy qualities that greatness can be acquired not through the trust one obtains.

With how trustworthiness is the foundation of true trust established within the past one must then look to the present to see how trust is currently affecting every individual. One thing that has yet to be established is how trust must go both ways for it to be successful. A popular description of this concept comes from a term "Popular Sovereignty" that essentially states that one's power comes only from the people who give up theirs. For example Queen Elizabeth the

First was one of the first tutors to realize that the crown must work with parliament, since parliament spoke for the people and the people gave her power. With this concept that trust must work both ways being established, one incredible example of trust starting on a miniscule scale but then impacting the entire globe is to look at a soldier. A common soldier is the base for any military yet on their own they may seem insignificant, what can one soldier do? Yet, when one soldier puts their trust in their comrades, commanders, generals, and heads of country, they turn from one individual unit to something beyond themselves. Through work and dedication this one soldier becomes trustworthy: their dedication to the craft, disciplined nature, loyalty, honesty, and abilities allows them to earn trust. Initially they may only have the duty to defend a local community like a local military base. Then as they earn more trust they may move up the ranks defending their state possibly in the capital. Further down the road, they may have opportunities in the Nation's capital or abroad to defend their nation as a whole. Finally on the global stage possibly working in worldwide agencies such as the UN as an elite soldier, tasked with some of the most essential work. The point of this entire story of a soldier is to showcase how through trustworthiness one can make a true impact no matter where they are.

To look further beyond the present implications of trust and the impact of trustworthiness, we must acknowledge the definitions for both. What is trust? How is trustworthiness earned? What causes one to lose trustworthiness? First off the official Merriam-Webster dictionary definition for trust is “Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something”. With that it can be assumed then that trust is given purely to people with these traits defined above, and yet throughout history trust has been betrayed almost daily. Then one would reasonably ask what then can we put our trust in, when things with a veneer of trustworthiness turn out to be false? Maybe then the answer can be found in how something earns trust. Some of

the basic ways someone can earn trust includes going back to the four main concepts: being honest, showing integrity, keeping promises, and showing loyalty. These four things are sometimes in life very difficult to maintain and difficult to draw lines, for example is it honest to tell a white lie? In many cases personally I would say no, while others would say yes — so long as it does not harm others. Yet, famous scientist Albert Einstein stated “Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important affairs”. So then in this case things earn trust based more on what each individual would define as trustworthy without a basic definition. Continuing off of that should we as a society then never trust those around us until they have earned it, or instead should every human deserve a basic level of trust that can fluctuate? To the third and final question I asked to help give some basic definition, how is trust lost. It goes back to the question on how it is earned, similarly people have their own reasoning behind how it is lost. When one betrays or forsakes another's trust they on a certain level become untrustworthy. The simple answer for everything is that there is no “simple answer”, trustworthiness is different for everyone. All we can do as good citizens is aim to have inalienable qualities of trustworthiness, while no one may be perfect in everyone's eyes, everyone striving to be “trustworthy” is what will build a better future.

While the official definitions behind trustworthiness are murky, at best, we can still look towards the future. The greatest empires of all time had trust as a solid foundation, continuing into today we have maintained that nature to trust those around us. It is how we as a society will continue to evolve, and so will our ability to trust. Today we must put our trust in many different aspects of life to continue building a better future. For example when parents send their kid to school, they do not just send them to some staranges house, they send them to a system they trust to help propel their child into the future. During election season, particularly in the US, we put

our trust in our candidates for government positions in hopes that they will help shape the future. On a global scale charitable citizens may put their trust into organizations to help benefit the world as a whole, from building wells in Kenya to creating housing in California. For a society to function properly it is imperative that we have trust. A world without trust is a world of chaos, one where there are no rules or regulations: just survival. Now in order to build trust there must be some level of trustworthiness that is why to young children we tell stories of a boy who cried wolf or of a wooden puppet named Pinocchio. Being trustworthy is the only way to create a world of not just survival but a world of living.

Now for one final section related to trustworthiness, hopefully as a reader you have learned how trust has in the past created great empires, currently the trust of one soldier is enough to help shape the world, and how trust is critical for the future, so finally I will tell an anecdote on how trust has affected me. As a child I always found it difficult to tell who I could really trust, I tended to be skeptical and do things on my own. I found it far easier to rely on myself than rely on others for any type of tasks. Growing up, particularly in high school, it quickly became too much work during projects for any one person to handle. Slowly I had to begin relying on others for help, slowly I found a few I could trust and many I could not. I tell this story not as a mere personal story but to showcase how trust can open up new doors. Prior to Covid I struggled deeply with a sense of belonging, I found it easier to never trust at all then to trust and get betrayed. I had a small group of friends I found outside of school, but during the weekdays I was primarily alone; until Covid. Covid gave me what I have always considered a restart, a new chance. I worked diligently to learn how to more openly trust. In doing so what I never would have figured out, my life changed for the better; with me starting to trust others, others than trusted me. Of course throughout the years I have had a few ups and downs, some

people I never should have trusted, but many? I found out I should have trusted far sooner. One of my closest companions now I have known since the third grade, and I disliked her. That was until my later years in high school when we actually got to know and trust each other. We bonded over shared experiences and found we had a lot more in common than we would have thought, now she is one of the people I confide in and look up to the most. Now my goal in life is to stay open to trusting people, and I hope in return I will find those who trust me. To reiterate my point is not to tell a touchy tale but to explain how opening up to trust truly can change one's life for the better.

Becoming trustworthy is one of the most quintessential things a person can accomplish. Trust is the backbone of society from small local communities, to our states, to our united nation, and to the global level. For any reader out there who may struggle with trusting others or understanding what trust is. You are not alone, trust is a complicated thing. It is easy to have been hurt by someone you trusted and it makes it difficult to find trust in others again. While learning to trust again helped open up doors for me, trusting may be just one step in a strenuous process. My one hope for the world is that we can be a world of trust, one where we can trust our neighbors completely, because they are trustworthy not “just because”. Through honesty, integrity, keeping our promises, and our loyalty we all can create a better tomorrow.