



Session 2.14 | Developing Your Leadership Skills Part 4

In the last session, we looked at How to Deal with Poor Leadership and how it impacts your leadership development.

In this session, we will look at trust and Fast Action Tip #7 - How to deal with someone who abuses your trust.

Take just a moment right now and download the Worksheet so you can follow along in this session.

In our interactions with other people, we begin every relationship by making a split-second choice between trust and distrust. To trust them or to not trust them

100% of the time — there has never been an exception — we either trust a person or we don't. It's that simple. Then, every subsequent interaction is directly related to that initial decision.

Our behavior clearly demonstrates whether we trust or mistrust.

Here are 3 simple ways to help you evaluate if you've made the decision to trust or mistrust. If you trust, you will...

1. Care about the other person. If you are going to effectively influence people or impact people, you must care for them, and they must know that you care.
2. Confront conflict together. Avoid the temptation to dance around the issue, deal with it directly. Most of us are reluctant to confront because we are afraid of how the other person may respond if we hurt their feelings.
More often than not, our reluctance simply causes additional conflict – small disagreements become larger disagreements.
Since small issues are always easier to deal with than larger issues, be firm but gentle. Work toward a solution together and use the conflict to make the relationship, the team, and the organization better.
3. Cooperate together to solve problems. In every life situation involving people whether it's family, friends or co-workers there is potential for conflict. So learning to successfully handle conflict should be a priority, especially for those who desire to lead teams and organizations.

Then, when the conflict is resolved, grant forgiveness readily. There's no reason to hold a grudge or seek revenge.

Healthy people and healthy teams allow it to make them stronger.

If you're in mistrust mode...

You'll find yourself operating from a win-lose perspective. You will assess every situation evaluating if you are winning or if you are losing.

When we choose to view a particular individual through the lens of mistrust rather than trust, usually everyone around us and around them knows it. They see our communication, our actions, and our decisions.

Nothing productive ever comes out of mistrust mode.

It's possible that somebody, at some point, is going to abuse your trust, and while we feel perfectly justified not trusting those who we've labeled untrustworthy, we want them to trust us – right away.

Unfortunately, that's just not reality. Trust is often earned over time. Trust is the byproduct of trustworthiness.

Great leaders patiently foster trust, respect, and loyalty rather than expecting it or demanding it.

What do you do when someone abuses your trust?

Now, let's look at Fast Action Tip #7- How to deal with someone abuses your trust

If you're like me, you approach business relationships expectantly. You spend countless hours working together with the team to develop vision and cultivate passion. You sacrifice far beyond what is expected, and you consistently meet and exceed goals. Then, out of the blue, the unthinkable happens.

You wish you had seen it coming. If only you had noticed his insecurity, his manipulative nature, and the gaps in her integrity much earlier, you would've been better prepared to deal with the fallout – when she misused her position, took advantage of the organization, sold the team out, and abused the trust that was placed in him.

If you found yourself in this unfortunate situation, you were most likely blindsided by it. Rarely does anyone see it coming.

For days, maybe weeks, you wrestle with your thoughts and emotions. Eventually you must decide – how are you going to handle it?

Here are 4 things to remember when someone abuses your trust...

1. Be sure you have the facts

It's easy to miss this one. In fact, nearly all of us struggle with this. We are hurt, we're taken by surprise, and we're derailed and disillusioned. Then, to make matters worse, we neglect to check the facts.

Is it possible that the situation isn't what it seems? Are we being overly sensitive? Have we given the other individual an opportunity to explain? If not, start there.

If you do have all the facts, then it may be best to...

2. Let it go and walk away

It really is unfortunate, but it's true – you are going to experience incredibly challenging situations in your life, work, and leadership. You've already figured that out. Colleagues in whom you've placed implicit trust are going to let you down.

You're going to learn to shake it off and move on. Let it go.

If you don't, the subsequent hurt and emotional roller coaster will be far more damaging than the initial let down. Moving on allows you to put the hurt in the past and get back on top of your game.

3. Don't publicize it

Yes, there were times that I wanted to share my side of the story. I wanted to clear my name. I wanted to expose my attacker and the wrong that had been done to me

Rarely is it a good idea to publicly criticize the offender – it only makes you look small and petty.

If necessary, seek counsel from a few very close advisers. Then, trust that the pain will bring about growth and good in your life and in your work.

4. Don't give up

Learn from the situation. Be more discerning next time. Heed the early warning signals. But don't let fear hold you back.

I've noticed that I'm now less likely to trust initially, and maybe that's okay – it helps me to more carefully conduct research. But it's not healthy for me to expect others to be devious right off the bat.

If I assumed that others have negative intent, I'll never be able to fully engage with them. I'll never see my team reach my full potential or with my organization with the marketplace.

There are many great leaders who place high value on integrity. Many great organizations are defined by a fundamental culture of trust. If you can't find one, start one! Just don't give up on your vision. And don't give up on people.

If I could spare you the pain of having someone abuse your trust, I would do it. But I can't – no one can.

What I can tell you is that I've grown through the painful process. And in every circumstance in life, even a painful one, there's opportunity for growth.

If you haven't already, take a moment to download the Worksheet on this page and complete the action steps for this session.

Remember, especially in challenging situations like this, you don't need to get it perfect, you just need to take the next best step.