

An Ecological Perspective on the Lifecycle of Trust in Leadership

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Overview

- Trust Imperative for Leadership

Leadership

is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

Why Leadership

- Exercising leadership is a way of giving meaning to your life by contributing to the lives of others. At its best, leadership is a labor of love. Opportunities for these labors cross your path every day, though we appreciate through the scar tissue of our own experiences that seizing these opportunities takes heart.

(Heifetz & Linsky, 2013)

Lifecycle of Trust

- establishing
- maintaining
- sustaining
- breaking
- restoring

Consider taking apart...

Ecological Perspective of Trust

- Living and breathing ecosystems
- Trust – vital to the health of the living system
 - anti-toxin, a health giving ingredient for good will and excellent working and learning experiences
- *Lifecycle of trust*: built, brokered, bolstered, as well as breached, broken, and betrayed
- Relational dynamics in *establishing, maintaining, sustaining, breaking, and restoring* trust

What is trust?



Understanding Trust

- Trust is the extent to which one engages in a reciprocal interaction and a relationship in such a way that there is willingness to be vulnerable to another and to assume risk with positive expectations and a degree of confidence that the other party will possess some semblance of benevolence, care, competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, hope, and wisdom (Curral & Epstein, 2003; Daly, 2009; Day, 2009; Mishra & Mishra, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Vulnerability and Fragility

- Trust is willingness to risk in the face of vulnerability
- Where there is no vulnerability there is no need for trust
- The one who trusts recognizes the potential for betrayal and harm from the other
- Fragility is caused by uncertainty

Facets of trust

Benevolence
confidence that one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted person

Reliability
the extent to which one can count on another to come through with what is needed

Competence
the ability to perform a task as expected, according to appropriate standards

Honesty
moral character as expressed through virtuous attributes of integrity, truthfulness, and authenticity

Openness
the extent to which relevant information is not withheld

Trust Studies

- In-depth qualitative study of the Canadian principals in exploring *with others* the issues of trust affecting their roles and responsibilities
- Nominated by superintendents
- Participated in five in-depth interactive group sessions over a period of seven months
- Ranged in experience from 1-15 years in principal role, from elementary, K-12 and high school sectors
- intensive, narrative-based, and interactive approach to explore principals' experiences of trust
- Exploratory study of the Canadian school principals' perceptions of moral agency and trust-brokering roles in schools (SSHRC funded)
- Open-ended survey questions
- 177 participants from all 13 jurisdictions in Canada
- Participants – mostly between age of 40-60, ranges of professional and administrative experiences, mostly with formal ethical training
- Thematic analysis of open-ended responses

Research Articles

- Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2016). Don't leave home without it! The trust imperative in the principalship. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 15 (3), 343-372.
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- Kutsyuruba, B., & Walker, K. (2014). The lifecycle of trust in educational leadership: An ecological perspective. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 18(1), 108-121.
- Walker, K., Kutsyuruba, B., & Noonan, B. (2011). The fragility of trust in the world of school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(5), 471-494.
- Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2011). Restoring broken trust in the work of school principals. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 39(2), 81-95.
- Kutsyuruba, B., Walker, K., & Noonan, B. (2010). The ecology of trust in the principalship. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations*, 21(1), 23-47.
- Noonan, B., Walker, K., & Kutsyuruba, B. (2008). Trust in the contemporary principalship. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 85(November 2), 1-11.

Trust Imperative

- Trust is fundamental in our lives
- Important to human survival and ability to function in the complex and interdependent world (Tschannen-Moran, 2004)
- Glue that binds relationships together (Marshall, 2000)
- Lubricant that greases communication and effective/efficient interactions within organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2004)

Trust as Lubricant of Cooperation

- Trust is a purposive behaviour aiming at the maximization of utility under risk.
- Mutual trust is form of social capital which reduces cost of monitoring and sanctioning activities
- Blau (1964, p. 259) we trust one another only to the degree that our own interest is served
- Elster (1989, p. 274) two kinds of trust
 - ability to make credible promises
 - part of a code of honour (belief that other party will act honourably even under unforeseen circumstances not covered by contract or promises)

Relationships and Trust

- Social-psychological perspective of trust (nature of trust in interpersonal interactions) (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996)
- Relational trust perspective (social exchanges around sets of role relationships in schools) (Blau, 1986; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Merton, 1957)
- Understanding trust in professional relationships and fostering healthy cultures of trust in organizations is vital

Trust and Leaders

- Leader is viewed as a broker of information and relationships and a mediator of values and decision making
- Leader's role is that of a moral agent who judges and makes decisions and fosters community trust not only in themselves but also internally (within organization) and externally (with community)

Lifecycle of Trust



- establishing

Establishing Trust

- Trust is a time and effort-consuming process, essentially a learned behavior (Solomon & Flores, 2001)
- Social relations are at the core of establishing trust (Misztal, 1996)
- May result from calculation or from shared values (Liebskind & Oliver, 2000)

Establishing Trust

- Establishing initial trust requires time vs. trust pre-exists in relationships and may diminish or increase over time
- Organizational contexts, culture, and previous experiences may expedite or slow the process

Establishing Trust

- Process
 - Knowledge-based trust (Shapiro, Sheppard, & Cheraskin, 1992)
 - Provisional trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004)
- “Us vs. them” mentality is a major barrier

Lifecycle of Trust



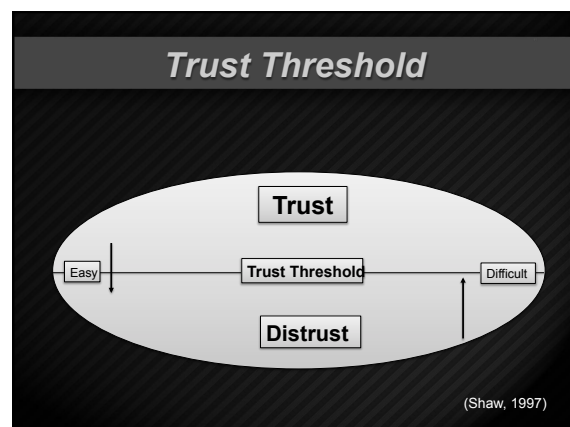
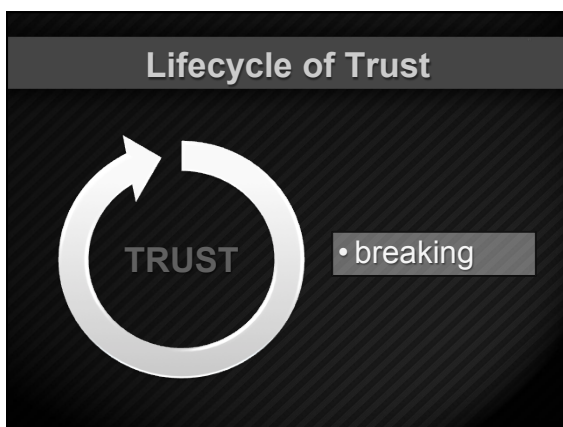
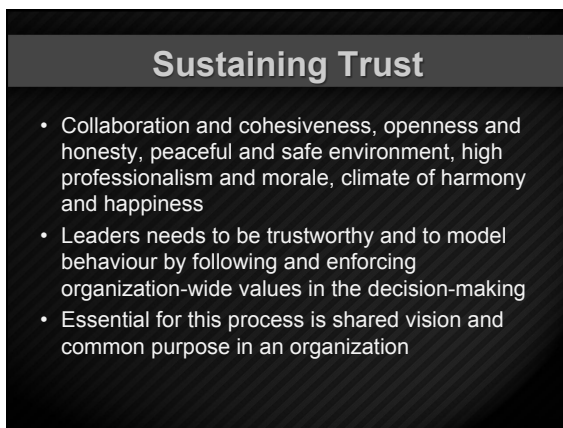
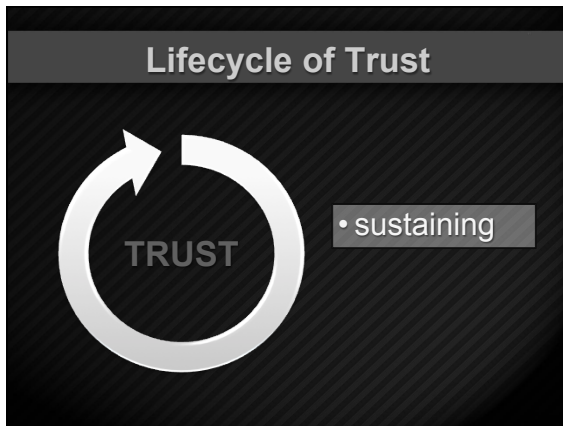
- maintaining

Maintaining Trust

- Durability of trust depends on the proximal conditions that support it (Messick & Kramer, 2001).
- Ongoing communication (Govier, 1998)
- Leadership by example (Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989)
- Authenticity and transformational leadership (Forsyth, 2008)
- Personal integrity of a leader (Leonard, 1999)

Trust Maintenance

- Continuous relationship building process
- Leadership through genuine care and authentic interest
- Community of leaders through autonomy/independence and collaboration interdependence



Causes of Breakdown of Trust

- Betrayal
- Breach of confidentiality
- Deception
- Dishonesty
- Breach of integrity
- Corruption
- Overuse of power
- Exclusion



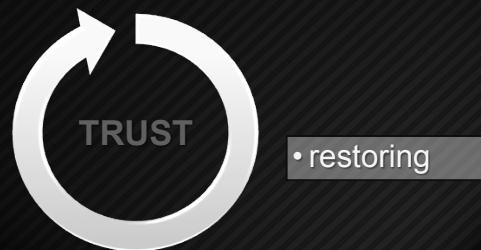
Effects of Broken Trust

- Gossip, lying, breach of confidentiality, breach of integrity
- Damage to civic order (broken promises, deception, stealing ideas or credit)
- Damage to one's sense of identity (public criticism, accusations, insults, complaints, ridiculous insinuations, dishonesty)
- Trustworthiness is thwarted

Enduring Nature

- *Enduring* nature of trust in relationships
- Although fragile and often broken, trust is not *extremely* fragile, which means it can be restored and renewed
- Although a difficult and time-consuming task, broken trust and low-trust situations can be successfully mediated

Lifecycle of Trust



Restoration of Broken trust

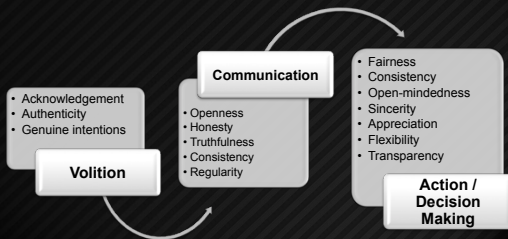
- Honest communication, meticulous reliability, and persuasion over coercion
- Facilitated by constructive attitudes, clear boundaries, communication of promises and credible threats, and constructive conflict resolution strategies (Tschannen-Moran, 2004)
- A leader may also restore trustworthiness through behavioral consistency, behavioral integrity, sharing and delegation of control, communication, and demonstration of concern (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998)

Initiation of trust repair



- Two way process (violator/victim)
- Violator initiated:
 - 4 A's of absolution: admit, apologize, ask forgiveness, amend
- Victim response:
 - Refusal
 - Acknowledgment of forgiveness with unreasonable reparation conditions
 - Acknowledgment of forgiveness with reasonable reparation conditions
 - Forgiveness without any further acts of reparation

Trust restoration: Process



Implications

- Understanding the dynamic nature of trust is an important undertaking for school administrators
- Due to the nature of their positions, principals are moral agents and leaders in trust development process
 - Symbolic leadership (Deal & Peterson, 2009) and leadership modeling (Reeves, 2002)
 - Distributed leadership (not a lone-ranger mentality)
 - Instill optimism (Hoy & Smith, 2007)
 - Fostering hope (warranted hope) (Walker, 2006; Walker & Atkinson, 2010)

Implications

- *Relationship building* was seen as a key component for the development, maintaining, sustaining, and restoring of trust.
- The nature of relationships and trust differed at various stages, from basic levels of trust and relationships at the initial stage to deeper levels of trust and relationships at the stages of maintaining and sustaining of trust.
- Principal is a leader of leaders

Final thoughts

- Principals believed that although fragile and often broken, trust was enduring in nature and subject to restoration and renewal
- Although a difficult and time-consuming task, broken trust and low-trust situations can be successfully mediated

"Work at trust! Don't give up"