

Building and Expanding Trust

Part Three

Trust and the Conditions of Life

Our survival, success, and ultimate happiness depend on our ability to trust and to be trusted by others. If we intend to have our invitations, offers, and requests met quickly, enthusiastically, and purposefully, we must take into consideration that trust is a social practice. Building and expanding trust in the marketplace requires a greater understanding of the broader phenomenon of human interaction and coexistence across many *Conditions of Life*.

Throughout this series, we focus and concentrate our study on *building and expanding trust* as we transact in the marketplace. We reference noted psychologists, sociologists, and highly accomplished business people in this series and continue our in-depth study of the text *Building Trust in Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life* by Robert C. Solomon and Fernando Flores.

In our first two issues we introduced the most basic understanding people have of trust and introduced *simple*, *blind* and *authentic trust*. We distinguished certain breaches of trust that exist and how these breaches affect trust. We considered the practices required for developing, and building trust as a recurrent and dynamic set of habits and practices in the process of transacting in the marketplace. We looked at the impact marketplace indifference, moods, attitudes, and states of mind have on how people trust, and touched briefly on how the weapons of influence affect our ability to trust and be trusted.

We introduced ‘membership and social norms’ and considered the importance of preserving and restoring trust through the use of apology; summarizing the most basic elements required to make an effective apology. We proposed that the ‘business apology’ is a *transaction* and looked at how the transaction cycle plays an important role in assessing the proper moves and attitudes when making an apology. We stated that the business apology must be studied and practiced prior to the need for its use, and looked at how personality and transactional behavior play into making apologies.

In this issue we complete the series with a study of trust and the *Conditions of Life* and we will consider the biological, linguistic, and transactional mechanics required to expand our capacities of trust in the marketplace.

Trust in Practice - *Review*

Trust is a practice. “Trust is something that we do individually; it is something we make, we create, we build, we maintain, we sustain, with our promises, our commitments, our emotions and [moods] – our own individual sense of *integrity*.ⁱ Establishing, Building and expanding trust, is accomplished over time. What we are making, building and expanding over time is a story about how we act in the world.

To accomplish anything, and certainly to produce anything worthwhile in the marketplace, we must trust others and be trusted by others to *act*. When we act (behave) in a manner that is consistent with the ethics, practices and habits of others, we attract invitations, offers and requests from those who see our actions as consistent with and potentially beneficial to their intent to take care of their own needs, wants and desires in life. When we observe others behaving in ways that are consistent with our own ethics, habits and practices we form opinions and create certain narratives about how transacting with them may benefit us.

Adults are mindful of their actions as they transact in the marketplace. *Ambitious adults* take this one step further – they behave purposefully, intentionally and strategically in order to demonstrate that they can be trusted to *act* in *The Current* marketplace. They understand that they are always transacting and in turn, always building and expanding trust.

To understand trust is to first understand that it is a constant and dynamic occurrence as we speak and act in our everyday lives. We are always building and expanding trust because we are always speaking and acting in the world and being observed by others. The question becomes what kind of narrative(s) is being produced in the minds of others about our trustworthiness and our ability to trust others?

Trust is an option, a choice at all times. It is an active part of our daily lives, not something that has to be there from the beginning, or that can be taken for granted.ⁱⁱ Trust is a dynamic of human interaction that is built over time and requires skill to build effectively, which includes restoring trust when it has been lost or is betrayed.

Trust is not always a good thing. Trust can be foolish, naïve, gullible, and blind.ⁱⁱⁱ We decide and choose to trust and act to the degree of our ability to see the opportunities and consequences related to it, now and in the future. We make decisions to trust. We make promises and tacit commitments. We see them through or we suffer the consequences.

Most people live in a world of ungrounded expectations and don't embody practices related to the dangers inherent in them. When we come to have expectations of others, and we respond to the fulfillment or frustration of those expectations we put *trust* at risk or into *consideration*^{iv}.

Trust is something we do, something we make. Trust exists in the mind as a narrative about how we (and others) act in the world.

Our mutual choices of trust determine nothing less than the kinds of beings we are and the kinds of lives we will live together.^v

Three Kinds of Trust - *Review*

We introduced three forms of trust in Part One of this series: *simple trust*, *blind trust*, and *authentic trust*.

Simple trust is essentially a form of trust that is unreflective, unthinking and is the kind of trust most people hold as their standard.

On the one hand, we could say we cannot coexist without a basic or *simple trust* in others and their concern for their own *Conditions of Life*. However, *all too often simple trust turns out to be nothing but false comfort in a situation that, if tested, proves not to be deserving of trust at all.*^{vi}

Blind trust is not an innocent form of simple trust, but rather an orientation that includes some recognition or exposure to violation and betrayal and best characterized as essentially “self-deceptive” behavior. The refusal of consideration of evidence, taking the time for proper reflection and *accurate thinking*, or the willful act of not examining options or *specific knowledge of consequences* is blind trust.

Authentic trust is a form of trust based on *accurate thinking*. It is reflective and open to evidence. It includes and accepts as a necessary element that trust exists because of the possibilities and eventualities of mistakes, violations, and betrayal. In other words, without the possibility of betrayal, trust as we know it, would not be necessary. There is no willful denial of the acts required to consider and even prepare for the consequences of betrayal. Authentic trust is not the denial of simple trust, but the recognition of it. It is a kind of trust that accepts a level of recognition of our own indifference and yet is not surprised or threatened when violations occur in the day-to-day activities of living life – and even more specifically – transacting in the marketplace.

Authentic trust differs from simple trust because it demands reason for trusting. Unlike blind trust, it insists on an open mind in considering the evidence that leads to trust. But trust is always more than purely evidentiary; thus, we are careful about any approach that limits an understanding of *trust* to a strict, rational, or purely objective criterion. Trust is not based on evidence only. To treat *trust* as a black or white thing promises to make trust too rational and ignores a broader concept of trust. Trust outstrips the evidence that would rationally justify it in many cases. This does not mean that trust is irrational. Rationality is not only found in the accumulation of evidence; it is also identified in terms of *what one really cares about*. Trusting is also rational because it is a way of creating, maintaining, deepening, and restoring relationships. It is not the weight of the evidence that makes trust rational or irrational. It is the desirability of the end, the relationship – and in this case at least, the end justified the means.^{vii}

Building and Expanding Trust

The Conditions of Life

Throughout all of our studies we assert that the only reason anyone transacts at all is to take care of their *Conditions of Life*. There is no reason for 'transactions' to occur at all, except to handle some need for survival in some way. Where this is obvious is at the most basic level of human existence, that of the need for food, clothing and shelter. Where it may not be so obvious is the need for identity, spirituality, legacy, sex, or social acceptance for example.

In this issue, we will complete our introduction to trust and the importance of building and expanding it by examining how trust affects the willingness of others to transact with us; *to have OUR invitations, offers and requests accepted in order for others to take care of THEIR Conditions of Life*.

Conditions of Life

The *Conditions of Life* must be considered when transacting in the marketplace if we intend to create wealth.

A *condition* is defined as "the state of something"; the circumstances affecting the way a person lives, works, and behaves, the state of affairs that must exist or be brought about before something else is possible or permitted. A *Condition of Life* is defined as a circumstance, state or situation that adults must tend to live a happy life. For example, our individual health, the 'condition' of our mind and body for example, is a *Condition of Life* that we must tend to if we are going to enjoy our lives. It is safe to say that the extent to which we enjoy good health, determine our ability to enjoy our life. It is easy to see that people who enjoy good Health enjoy more opportunity to live a happy and good life. People, who suffer with poor Health, have fewer options and opportunities to enjoy life.

Another example of an obvious *Condition of Life* is Money. Our ability to afford everything from the most basic necessities required to survive, to the comforts or even luxuries available to us require Money. Our ability to live a good and happy life requires that we tend to this condition. We cannot avoid the need for Money any more than we can avoid the need for Health. And this is true for many other *Conditions of Life*. We can ignore these conditions, but ignoring them doesn't mean they don't exist and, some are more important or relevant as a human being progresses through life. We go even further to suggest that if the most fundamental of these conditions is left unattended; the consequences produce a life of difficulty and hardship.

Those of us who understand, study and distinguish the *Conditions of Life* all human beings must tend to enjoy a highly competitive advantage over the majority of people attempting to transact in the marketplace. *People transact to take care of their Conditions of Life and they do not transact for anything else*. When we invent transactions, we must do so to offer care for one or more *Condition of Life*. Transactions must be invented, built and offered with this in mind.

Why most new products and service offers fail is not because they are not valuable or valid, they fail primarily because their offer simply does not take care of a *Condition of Life* in some way that is worth the discomfort others must suffer to learn about and/or obtain them. Too many times people think that a good idea for a product or service is worth the risk and high cost of taking it into the marketplace simply because it 'improves on' or is 'better than' something that

already exists. But what they fail to understand is how their 'new and improved offer' takes care of a *Condition of Life* in a substantial enough way that enough people will consider it seriously.

In addition, for those who attempt to transact in the marketplace with proven and existing offers, they do so with the misguided notions that skill, personality, good ideas, hard work, good attitudes, merit, education, clever marketing, trustworthiness, and many other features and benefits are the 'reason why' people do (or ought to) transact with them. Though important, these qualities and "attributes" are not 'why people transact with us', they are the reason 'why people pay attention or avoid us'. Rather than making invitations, offers and request addressing the *Conditions of Life*, they speak and act in these 'attributes' as they move about the marketplace. In other words, they have missed the key factor required to affect marketplace indifference.

As we have discussed in this series, it takes considerable effort and time to develop the invitations, offers and requests that are compelling, exciting or threatening enough to break through the indifference of the marketplace. Center's of influence in higher ecologies will not incur the cost of seriously considering our invitations, offers and requests unless they first recognize that the "trust" they currently have in the solutions they are currently depending 'should be' reconsidered. This will not happen because of some "interesting" attribute. It will happen because our invitations, offers and request speak directly to the concern they have for one or more *Condition of Life* that is important to them at the time.

It is at this "time of consideration", that trust is called into question. How we convey this trust includes how we speak and act in our everyday lives, in our families, community organizations, churches, charities, in other public settings. If someone is 'known' for a certain kind of behavior in one area of their life, it will affect how they are related to in others. For example, if you know that another person is a gossip and/or traffics in mischief or indifference in other *Conditions of Life*, it is unlikely that this reputation or identity will go unnoticed or ignored in their business transactions. One cannot expect to do well if they are known or distrusted because of breaches of trust in other areas of their life.

Behavior and demonstrations in other *Conditions of Life* that are inconsistent with the offer(s) we are making in our business transactions diminish trust and reduce our ability to transact effectively. Do not be fooled by the narratives of *The Current* that seek to convey the politically correct nonsense that our actions and behavior in one domain or area of our life "ought not" or somehow "do not" affect all others. This is simply not true in terms of the marketplace. The world might be a better place if an offensively ugly old woman had the same opportunities in representing a cosmetics line as a beautiful young woman does, but that is not the world in which we live today. An obese old man will have a difficult time representing a diet and exercise plan and an investment banker will not do well without access to the wealthy. And yet, it is common to find people who enter the marketplace with transactions that are based on these kinds of exceptions.

In the same light, traditional sales training and business development teach techniques and practices that concentrate invitations and offers only on the customer's needs and wants, ignoring any disclosure of our aims or desires. They teach that our motives, needs, wants and aims are of no consequence to our prospect or customer and that we should remember that 'the customer is always right.' This is simply inaccurate for all but the most general offers in the marketplace. In fact, the more substantial the offer you are making, the more important your

chief aims become to your customers. When we demonstrate to our customers that ‘our’ reason, purpose and willingness to transact with them are to care for our *Conditions of Life*, we build authentic trust with them. Where they are most likely indifferent to our specific concerns, they are not indifferent to our motives. Because they are indifferent to your specific concerns, any attempt to convey the same will be met with skepticism. No one who transacts at the level you will need to reach to attain your chief aims in life expects you to transact to care of their concerns over your own. Such offers should be reserved for the more naïve and general population of consumers who remain steeped in the narrative of *The Current*, mysticism, and other misbegotten notions of selflessness and altruism.

As is the case in any transaction, we first interact with others primarily through subjective narratives about possibility for action in the future. We may approach others and begin transactions with a background of knowledge, experience and evidence gained practically, throughout observations of objective action, however we are entering a possible transaction (conversation, interaction, etc.) subjectively, and we do so in language – we talk.

We are creatures who talk, and therefore we are thinking, reflective creatures. We don’t just avow our trust, we examine it, and we can thereby create and build it.^{viii} In fact, at all times and in all ways we are always transacting and in turn, always building and expanding the trust (or distrust) others have of us.

Simply by making noises with our mouths, we can reliably cause precise new combinations of ideas to arise in each other’s minds.^{ix} These ideas are most often about actions in the future. As we convey these ideas, we must correlate them to *The Current* and predictable outcomes, consequences and futures our ideas have on the Condition(s) of Life of those with whom we seek to transact. The combination of ideas that arise in the mind of our most sought after customer(s) must be consequential and meaningful – this will require that we understand what *Conditions of Life* our transactions affect and strategically design and build the language of our invitations, offers and request. We must trust ourselves and our organization(s) (teams, employees, partners, alliances, and vendors, etc) and this will require a level of focus, concentration, coordination and organization few are prepared to handle. Without the ethics, habits and practices of study and scheduling, creating wealth through marketplace transactions is unlikely.

Self-trust and Self Control are required to consistently and rigorous study and practice the specialized knowledge required to transact powerfully in today’s marketplace.

Skills for Building Trust – Self-trust and Self Control - Review

Trust is a skill; an aspect of virtually all human practices, cultures, and relationships. Skills are cultivated, whether or not they build on some natural or “inborn” foundation or are intentionally learned and practiced. There is a kind of competence essential to building trust, which we identify as *self-trust*. *Self-trust* learned and must be practices - over time so that, like a well-trained athlete, one makes the right moves, usually without much reflection. Not only trust but also the skills that make trust possible recede into the background. We pick up cues; we know when to make [invitations,] requests or offers; we know when to make or not make promises; we feel confident about situations and people because we know and understand characters with whom we are dealing. Self-trust is confidence in our possession of these skills.

Trust as a cultivated skill consists of both “automatic” behavior on the one hand and thoughtful reflection on the other. It is particularly important to emphasize that trust, like most skills, is not learned or cultivated on the basis of rules. Trust is a skill to be learned by doing, by interrelating, not by following some recipe. There is no proven sequence of steps through which we can make ourselves more trusting or more trustworthy. The way to build authentic trust is to *trust*.^x We establish practices of trusting by trusting. Trusting in practice will be different for different people and certainly for different parts of the world in which we live and work. Trusting involves an enhanced sensibility that allows us to work and coordinate our actions with other people precisely because we are confident of what we are doing.

Our ability to trust and be trusted is in large part grounded in our ability to trust ourselves. Self-trust and self-control are learned over time. They are learned through practice.

Breaches, Breakdowns, and Betrayals of Trust - Review

Authentic trust includes the inevitability of breakdowns resulting in breaches or betrayals of trust. Without the possibility of betrayal, there can be no trust, only reliance or predictability.

Not all betrayals are equal, however, and one of the reasons we mistakenly think of trust as so fragile is that we commingle any number of breakdowns in the *Conditions of Life*, including disappointments or failures, into one category: the category of *betrayal*. Trust involves risk, and authentic trust involves knowingly going into the unknown with others. The consequences of risk always include the inevitability of some disappointment and even failure. That does not necessarily mean that the trust has been betrayed or that the trust has been or need be permanently in question, or worse, destroyed altogether.

We will come to know that relationships built on authentic trust focus not just on a particular outcome but also on the intent and overall purpose of the relationship itself.

An authentic trusting relationship is able to weather all sorts of mishaps and disappointments with little and even no diminishment of authentic trust. Indeed, every entrepreneur will testify, without hesitation, that trusting – whether yourself or anyone else – means first the ability to tolerate and learn from disappointments and mistakes. To confuse these kinds of failures with betrayals, for example, is to set yourself and others up for no creativity, no innovation, no adventure, no intimacy, no trust, or in our way of thinking – no way to pursue happiness at all.^{xi} In our previous issue, we distinguished some of the breaches of trust. As you review the breaches we distinguished in our last issue, consider them in the context of building and expanding trust. Notice and observe how you and others react, respond and produce moods, attitudes and actions in the face of these breaches of trust. Notice for yourself how you manage and maintain your own Self-control. Practice!

Disappointments - In all transactions, in all interpersonal relationships, in all things where human beings and the complex world in which we live collide and are concerned – sometimes, some things simply do not work out. We cannot control all things in life. Here is where trust in oneself, one’s knowledge, becomes crucial. “Sometimes things don’t work out.” That is and should be part of our everyday wisdom and acceptance.

Mistakes - Sometimes things don't work out and someone is responsible. A single mistake or human error that goes beyond what we might classify as a disappointment is likely in all situations. The recognition of 'mistakes' alerts us to potential breakdowns and the possibility for future action.

Mischief - When we allow ourselves to take action that is against our ethics, commitments, chief aims, and promises, we commit a dangerous act of character – that of being mischievous. When we “get away with something” or knowingly take advantage of others in some way, we may not be committing an illegal or immoral act but we are committing an act that is against what we declared for ourselves. Mischief witnessed - is trust diminished.

Misrepresentation - Knowingly misleading, misguiding or taking advantage of others for personal gain falls into this category. Pretending or representing to have some skill or knowledge on which others agree to risk their time, energy, wellbeing, or money is a kind of breach that exists on many levels. Most claims made in our marketplace go unchecked and people know this - they know how to benefit from this phenomenon through misrepresentation and fraud.

Indifference - Whether innocent and unintentional inattention to detail, an insufficient sensitivity or concern or be it gross negligence, indifference is a serious breach of trust. *“Care is essential for trust to exist. The lack of sufficient caring is the antitheses to trust. Cynicism, even when it presents itself as serious and sincere, is often a self-deceived form of indifference. One pretends not to care when one really does care, or one intends not to care because one does not want to be responsible for doing anything about the situation. But between cynicism and indifference, there is only a philosophical difference: the cynic claims to have a philosophy of life to justify his or her irresponsibility”.^{xii} Indifference is a rejection of positive value; the possibility of interest [concern] remains inactive but is always in the background.* One rejects their recognition of positive value through their indifference, and by virtue of their actions, or more accurately – their inaction – demonstrate it.^{xiii}

Reneging - When a promise is made insincerely or one intentionally goes back on their word or breaks a promise, we consider this a form of lying known as reneging. Reneging on a promise is a clear case of a breach of trust. We renege on our promises when it is clear and evident in a most objective way that a specific promise (most of time made with 'good intentions') will not be kept.

Lying - Historically, the act of making a statement that is knowingly false and intended solely for the benefit of the speaker is considered in every culture as a serious and in many cases criminal perpetration. Lying embodies a wholesale amalgamation of all breaches of trust and is perhaps the underling foundation of the conditions that produce breaches at all. It is because human being 'can and do lie', have the capacity to say, at any time and in many different ways – something that is not truthful. Lying is most often perpetrated by those attempting to protect themselves from the consequences of their actions.

Series Completion

This series on trust is intended to serve as an introduction and more importantly and invitation to study. We are eager to engage those of you who have taken this study seriously and look

forward to hearing your feedback, thoughts and learning as you continue to consider the important of authentic trust and the use of apologies in your business transactions.

i	Robert Solomon & Fernando Flores, <i>Building Trust in Business, Politics, and Relationships</i> (Oxford University Press, 2001)
ii	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
iii	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
iv	<i>Consideration</i> is one of the constitutive elements found in the 'State of Completion' – simply put, anything that is in consideration cannot be complete.
v	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
vi	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
vii	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
viii	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
ix	Steven Pinker, <i>The Language Instinct</i> ; (William Morrow and Co.,Inc, 1994)
x	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
xi	Ibid - Solomon/Flores
xii	Ibid – Solomon/Flores
xiii	Georg Simmel "The Philosophy of Money" (Original publication approximately 1907Third Edition Translation by Frisby/Bottomore – Routledge 1978/2004)