

Trust

What does trust really mean? There are more trainings than we can count that speak of trust and several of the lets us experience this thing in different forms, for example by improvisational theatre together with my co-workers or by falling backwards into the arms of my waiting (hopefully) colleagues.

I have spent some time think about the concept of trust and this article is a collection of quotes, poems, reading and some other stuff mixed with my own reflections and experiences of this concept. In my work with peoples growth, and lets not forget – my own growth, I perceive myself as constantly bumping into this five letter word. So together lets twist and turn this word around for a bit.

Erik Eriksson who amongst other things is well known for his work with children's developmental stages, has said that trust is "faith in that the good will return". Many of us have probably played peek-a-boo with a small child and seen its eyes fill with wonder as Mum (or whoever you may be in the life of this little child) disappear and then return again. Eriksson claims that this is something that the child has to be trained, experiencing how its mother disappears, to then return once again as a representation of the good in life. Faith in that the good will return.

Do we believe that when we have a conflict at work? A fight with our beloved about who should really decide where the furniture should go? Will the good return even if I express my own will, give words to my feelings and reactions that might be perceived as negative by others? Do I trust the people around me? Do I have faith in that the good will return?

"When we feel safe in our environment we also dare to feel trust towards other people. By being available, taking the time to explain things and answering questions, we hope to achieve this"

(The Church School in Sala, Sweden)

A look at K F Söderwalls "Dictionary for the Medieval Swedish Language" tells us that trust is the same as support, help and a person in whom "we confide". In whom do you confide? One phenomenon that seems be slanted towards the male population and by which the author of this article also feels "infected" by is the big challenge in asking for help. If we have a hard time asking for, and further on receiving, support and help, can we then feel trust? Maybe a trust building day somewhere out in the woods or in a well-conditioned room should be about learning to ask for help and support.

Sometimes maybe we also are apted to believe in that voice that sits on our shoulders and tells us that "there is nobody who is willing to take the time to help ME" or maybe just as much that "there is nobody that would care much about receiving my help or my support".

How about fear and trust? The father of the FIRO-theory that speaks of a groups development over time, Will Schutz, claimed, and still claims as far as I know, that fear is the one big emotion that slows down the maturing and development of a group. The most important task of a leader in this perspective becomes to create the possibilities for decreasing fears. To foster a belief that the good will return...

"Be silent. Have trust. Our being is creation. We are intimately connected with what wants to become and exist. Your deep despair is not empty anxiety, it has a tone of the agony in depths where there is only will.."

(From the collection of poems "The Seven Deadly Sins" by Karin Boye)

If we feel fear usually our need for control increases. To have control and power over what happens, maybe also over others. If I have a great amount of trust I can let go of some of my need for control. Have you ever double-checked on someone in your surroundings after delegating (or at least after convincing yourself that you have been delegating) an important task and then more or less considerably assured yourself that the task has been done? Maybe you have on some occasion given this task to someone whom you trust greatly and did not feel a need to exert control over. If we have too big of a need for control I do not think that we allow an environment of trust to grow strong, but quell it in the belief that we create safety and comfort by exercising power over both ourselves and others.

"The bottom-line is a situation concerning the concepts of power and trust. It is clear that if one wants to expand the networks in a direction towards the employees, it will require knowledge, tolerance, trust and patience.

Trust creates a feeling of safety. It makes people feel assured that it is allowed to cooperate and share experience. This feeling of safety increases with time. A project such as the Internship-project therefore would not have been possible during the first year of the network".

(University of Halmstad)

Trust is an active effort, an effort that requires a, or lots of, choices. But we could probably also agree that I get the courage to choose if I feel trust and dare to believe (you know what's coming, don't you...) that the good will return, even if I "mess up" a bit with my choice.

"Is it possible to do wrong if one acts out of love? Love means respect for the child or the person. Every child has a destiny. If I as a parent have trust and faith in this and a will to carry the destiny of the child, then that gives a unique opportunity to know what is right. Trust gives us the courage to dare to be human and as humans we are constantly faced with choices. Man lives in the tension between good and bad. This is the challenge of life – to choose the "right path". A choice has consequences and means risks – not to choose is also a choice, though without consciously facing the consequences."

(Kirsten Nisted, Active Baby Care)

That it is the whole person who should choose to create the foundations for trust, we find if we search for the word "trust" on Microsoft Encarta online edition. What appears is a list of options for the word trust, one being trust as an emotion and then the word "faith" is equalled with trust.

"Faith, an attitude of the entire self, including both will and intellect, directed toward a person, an idea, or—as in the case of religious faith—a divine being."

(Microsoft Encarta Online, www.microsoft.com)

Trust is also a commonly used law term and in Encyclopaedia Britannica we read that in Anglo-American law it means "a relationship between people in which one has the power to handle property and the other has the privilege of receiving the benefits that come out of that property". How much power do I need to let go off for others to receive the benefits? Do I get power by giving and receiving trust? Power can be a negatively charged word, but if we see it as effect and influence it can be used as something very nice, at least in my view of the world. Once again this good use requires an action including both the will and the mind. Motivation and skill.

Nyberg's Bus Travel is a company that amongst other things arrange trips by bus to a place called Taizé in the south of France, that is every summer the meeting place of thousands and thousands of people, many young, from around the world. They come together to sing and many share a strong religious belief. I have neither travelled with Nyberg's or actually been to Taizé. Friends of mine describe a trip there as an extra-ordinary experience and on the homepage of Nyberg's we can read the following lines:

"The word trust is a key word in Taizé. The gatherings that are lead by brothers from around the world lead are a pilgrimages for trust on earth. The word trust is maybe one the most humble, everyday words that exists and at the same time one of most necessary.."

(Nyberg's Bus Travel)

So, what do you really mean the next time you say to someone "I trust you"? Some clever person once said "without a relation, no communication". I would like to add "without trust, no relation", at least not one where we have faith in that the good will return after sometimes disappearing around the corner.

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TRUST

*When I meet you I am reminded
of all the pain I have had to endure.
I am reminded of all the losses.
All the people who wandered out of my life.
It hurts so much to dare to start over again.
To dare to make a connection.
To relearn.
To have a new relation to people.
Also to you.*

(Ylva's Poem No.6, Ylva Erlingsson)