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25 behaviors that foster mistrust
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"Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly, and they will show themselves great."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

All of life is relationship - even life at work. The secret sauce that creates a healthy relationship is trust. The most critical foundational building block of a healthy team is trust. Without trust, most teams are really disparate collections of individuals called groups. The one element that creates or erodes trust is your individual behavior. Trust can support teams to go the extra mile, work for the greater good of the team and the organization, foster open and honest communication and engender mutual respect and support. Distrust, on the other hand, often stems form a "me first" mind-set that leads to destructive conflict, egoism, and a "going through the motions" attitude.

As trite and worn as the statement "There is no 'I' in team" is, it's a fact of life at work that when trust is lacking among team members, they spend inordinate amounts of time and energy resisting others' inappropriate behaviors, reacting to others' disingenuousness, playing politics, resisting meetings, and feeling reluctant to ask for, or give, support. In a culture characterized by mistrust, relationships suffer and when relationships suffer, performance, production and profits suffer. So, how might you be contributing to mistrust on your team?

Consider these 25 behaviors that contribute to creating mistrust within your team:

1. You fail to keep your promises, agreements and commitments.
2. You serve your self first, and others only when it is convenient.
3. You micromanage and resist delegating.
4. You demonstrate an inconsistency between what you say and how you behave.
5. You fail to share critical information with your colleagues.
6. You choose to not tell the truth.
7. You resort to blaming and scapegoating others rather than own your mistakes.
8. You judge blame and criticize rather than offer constructive feedback.
9. You betray confidences, gossip and talk about others behind their backs.
10. You choose to not allow others to contribute or make decisions.
11. You downplay others' talents, knowledge and skills.
12. You refuse to support others with their professional development.
13. You resist creating shared values, expectations and intentions in favor of your own agenda; you refuse to compromise and instead foster win-lose arguments.
14. You refuse to be held accountable by your colleagues.
15. You resist discussing your personal life, allowing your vulnerability, disclosing your weaknesses and admitting your relationship challenges.
16. You rationalize sarcasm, put-down humor and off-putting remarks as "good for the group."
17. You fail to admit you need support and dont ask colleagues for help.
18. You take others' suggestions and critiques as personal attacks.

19. You fail to speak up in team meetings and avoid contributing constructively.
20. You refuse to consider the idea of constructive conflict and avoid conflict at all costs.
21. You consistently hijack team meetings and move them off topic.
22. You refuse to follow through on decisions agreed upon at team meetings.
23. You secretly collude in back-door negotiations with other team members to create your own alliances.
24. You refuse to give others the benefit of the doubt and prefer to judge them without asking them to explain their position or actions.
25. You refuse to apologize for mistakes, misunderstandings and inappropriate behavior and dig your heels in to defend yourself and protect your reputation.

When you show up in integrity, authentically and exude humility and allow your vulnerability, others will see you as genuine, warts and all. As such, your teammates will begin to trust you and gravitate towards you as you have created a personal container of safety in which others feel they can relate to you in an equally genuine and sincere fashion.

Communication and true teamwork is a function of the human quality of trust, not technique, not technology. When trust is high, communication is easy and effortless. Communicating and relating are instantaneous. But, when trust is low, communicating and relating are efforting, exhausting, and time and energy consuming.

Finally, no one is willing to give 100% to someone they can't trust. Period!

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- How deeply do you trust your own guidance?
- Do you trust you know whats best for you?
- Do you often find yourself needing to be in control?
- Do you feel the people in your life should think, feel and behave as you do?
- Are fear, doubt and anxiety a large part of your life?
- Where or when do you feel not good enough or not worthy enough?
- Do you generally feel most folks cant be trusted?
- What would your life be like if you substituted trust for fear?
- Would you describe yourself as one who has a well-honed capacity to trust, be non-judgmental, and compassionate?
- Would folks describe you as a good listener? How do you know?
- Are you trustworthy?
- What does trust mean to you?
- On what do you base your notion of trust?
- Do you believe others, if/when asked, would say they trust you?
- Why is trust easy or difficult for you?
- What does someone have to do for you not to trust them?
- Do you have a lot of rules that have to be met before you trust someone?
- What was your experience around trust like when you were growing up?
- Have you ever been told, directly or indirectly, that you can't be trusted? If so, what was that like?

"The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him; and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and show your distrust." Henry L. Stimson

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