

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Advisor's Guide to personal growth and leadership development

Lesson Number: **RNH.6.4**

Building Trust

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand the importance of trust and how to build it in their lives.

Quick Reference:

Time Required:

90 minutes

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define concept of trust.
2. Identify situations in life where building trust is important.
3. Describe characteristics of being trustworthy.

Materials:

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Writing utensils
- ✓ Blindfolds – enough for half of the students in the class
- ✓ A copy of the book *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss
- ✓ RNH.6.4.AS.A – one per student

Directions:

Discuss the concept of trust with students.

1. Trust is the foundation of strong leadership.
 - a. The more others trust a leader, the more willing they will be to follow and work toward accomplishing the task set forth by the leader.
 - b. When a leader has faith and confidence in people and the group has faith and confidence in the leader, trust exists between them.
2. Trust is very important in groups.
 - a. If a group is to achieve its goals and objectives, the group members must trust one another.

Define trust; first ask students what they think it means, then continue by sharing the information below.

3. Ask students what they think trust is; have three to eight students share.
4. Trust is defined as the assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.
 - a. When we trust people, we place confidence in and depend on them.
 - b. “Trust is the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together” (Bennis & Nanus).
 - c. “If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his true friend” (Abraham Lincoln).





Ask students to identify a situation in life where building trust is important.

5. Have students think of situations in life and as a leader where building trust is important. Examples include:
 - a. Family members
 - b. Religious leaders
 - c. Friends and classmates
 - d. Teammates
 - e. Fellow officers
 - f. Employers
 - g. New acquaintances
6. Discuss how building trust with each of these groups may be similar and different.

Identify characteristics of being trustworthy, while asking students how they see these characteristics applicable in their lives.

7. To build trust, leaders must be trustworthy.
 - a. To be trustworthy means to exemplify character and competence.
 - b. Character includes virtues such as integrity, maturity, and persistence.
 - c. Competence refers to the knowledge and skills one has acquired.
8. Ask students to reflect on where they are with their character and competence.
9. Character makes trust possible.
 - a. As a leader of character, one must make sound decisions, admit mistakes, and put what is best for others and the organization ahead of personal needs.
 - b. Character is critical to strong leadership.
 - c. People will accept an occasional honest mistake due to a lack of ability, but a lack of character results in difficulty to regain trust.
10. Ask students what character looks like when carried out on a daily basis.
11. Competence is the ability to achieve results; to perform up to expectations that come with the position.
 - a. A leader must be willing to commit the time and effort to obtain necessary skills and knowledge needed to effectively fulfill his or her position.



12. Ask students what competence looks like when carried out on a daily basis.
13. Ask students how character and competence are similar and how they differ.

Continue the discussion about trust, focusing on people they trust and why trust is important in groups.

14. Trust is a natural law; it exists at a basic level between people.
 - a. We earn a higher level of trust as we reveal our character and competence through the relationships we develop with others.
15. Ask students to identify people they trust.
 - a. Have students share why they trust the people they identified.
16. Ask a couple of people to discuss situations when they trusted someone and were let down.
 - a. Ask them to share how they felt about the situation.
17. Explain that trust is one of the most fundamental parts of our relationships with others.
18. Relate to students that trust is very important in groups.
 - a. If a group is going to be able to achieve its goals and objectives, it is important that the group members trust one another.
 - b. Trust is not developed overnight.
 - c. Relationships built on trust emerge after the relationship has existed for a while and we have reinforcing, positive experiences with one another.

Share the metaphor of Covey's Emotional Bank Account with students to further illustrate the concept of trust.

19. In the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, author Stephen Covey equated building trust to building an emotional bank account.
20. The Emotional Bank Account (Covey):
 - a. We all know what a financial bank account is. We make deposits into it and build up a reserve from which we can make withdrawals when we need to. An emotional bank account is a metaphor that describes the amount of trust that's been built up in a relationship. It's the feeling of safeness you have with another human being.
 - b. If I make deposits into an emotional bank account with you through courtesy, kindness, honesty, and keeping my commitments to you, I build up a reserve. Your trust toward me becomes higher, and I can call upon that trust many times if I need to. I can even make mistakes and that trust level, that emotional reserve, will compensate for it. My communication may not be clear,



but you'll get my meaning anyway. You won't make me "an offender for a word." When the trust account is high, communication is easy, instant, and effective.

- c. But if I have a habit of showing discourtesy, disrespect, cutting you off, overreacting, ignoring you, becoming arbitrary, betraying your trust or threatening you, eventually my emotional bank account with you is overdrawn. Then what flexibility do I have?
 - d. None. I'm walking on mine fields. I have to be very careful of everything I say. I measure every word. It's tension city. It's protecting my backside.
21. Ask students to think about the balance of their emotional bank accounts with people in their lives including their friends, classmates, and family members.
- a. Have them consider if they need to make any deposits and if any of their accounts are overdrawn.

Transition to trust-building activities.

22. Split students into groups of two (accommodate accordingly for odd numbers of students).
23. Give each group a blindfold and instruct one person to put on the blindfold.
- a. The partner should determine the blindfolded person can't see.
24. Explain to students that each pair (group) will take a short walk around the campus area for about five to ten minutes.
- a. The blindfolded person will be led by her or his partner and will be dependent upon that person for instructions.
 - b. The un-blindfolded person should do their best to give accurate instructions and warn their partner about steps, walls, where to turn, etc.
25. When groups return to the classroom, have the pairs reverse their roles.
- a. Blindfold the other partner and have the pairs go for another walk.
26. When students have returned, ask them to share how it felt to rely on someone else.
- a. How did you exhibit characteristics of trustworthiness?
 - b. How was your partner trustworthy?



Extend thinking by reading Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss to students and have them answer the questions on RNH.6.4.AS.A.

27. Read *Horton Hatches the Egg* to the students.
28. Have students react to the story by answering the questions on RNH.6.4.AS.A.
29. Debrief by having students share their reactions to the questions with one another and then the entire class.

Summarize the concepts of trust and trustworthiness.

30. Have students identify the roles that trust, honesty, commitment, and follow through should play in the school setting.

Connection Questions:

1. What factors make trust possible?
2. How did you feel as you participated in the blindfold activity?
3. What is the value of trust in our lives?
4. What are the hazards associated with trusting in others?



LifeKnowledge Connections

Precept(s) Addressed:

Action

- A1. Work independently and in groups to get things done.
- A5. Communicate effectively with others.
- A7. Invest in others by enabling and empowering them.

Relationships

- B1. Practice human relations skills including compassion, empathy, unselfishness, trustworthiness, reliability, and listening.
- B2. Interact and work with others.
- B3. Develop others.
- B4. Eliminate barriers in building relationships.
- B5. Participate effectively as a team member.

Vision

- C3. Demonstrate courage to take risks.
- C4. Adapt to opportunities and obstacles.

Character

- D1. Live with integrity.
- D3. Accept responsibility for personal actions.
- D5. Practice self-discipline.

Social Growth

- H1. Acknowledge that differences exist among people.
- H2. Present self appropriately in various settings.
- H3. Develop, maintain, and grow healthy relationships.

Emotional Growth

- K1. Cope with life's trials.

Flexibility and Adaptability

- O3. Reacts with openness to feedback and professional growth opportunities.



LifeKnowledge Connections (cont.)

LK Lesson Suggestion:



Middle School

- MS.10 – Showing Respect
- MS.32 – The Need for Positive Relationships
- MS.57 – Finding Opportunities to Make Positive Change

High School

- HS.14 – Being Responsible and Accountable
- HS.15 – The Benefits of Character and Integrity
- HS.54 – First Impressions
- HS.57 – Building Mutual Interest
- HS.61 – Earning Trust
- HS.74 – The Importance of Attitude
- HS.81 – Decision Making in Groups
- HS.94 – Introduction to Group Problem Solving

Advanced High School

- AHS.6 – Respecting Others' Belief Systems, Vision, and Mission
- AHS.10 – Understanding Leader/Follower Dynamics
- AHS.11 – Building Followership



Name: _____

Date: _____

The Trick Is to Stick

Children's stories often provide reminders of important lessons. After hearing the story *Horton Hatches the Egg*, give serious thought to the following questions. Record your responses and be prepared to share with your classmates.

1. What do you think of Horton?
2. Why should Horton be criticized or praised for his behavior?
3. Describe an analogy between Mayzie Bird's behavior and a personal experience you have had in your life.
4. What was the result of Horton's willingness to trust and to see a job through to completion?
5. What skills can an individual possess or develop which would protect them from the dangers of placing unmerited trust?