

Notes on Restoring Trust

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INTRODUCTION

Trust is the fruit of trustworthy relationship. Basic trust accrues as trustworthiness grows in one's primary relationships. Initial investments of trust in any relationship, enable the creative mingling of positive giving and receiving which, under girded and infused by the grace of God, enhances the trustworthiness of the relationship and each person's capacity for trusting.

Breakdown of trustworthy relating, especially in primary relationships, promotes manifold psychological symptoms, fear, conflict, self-condemnation, despair, and depression. Conversely, restoring trustworthy relationship is an essential means for healing psychological imbalances and brokenness.

Attributes of trustworthy relating include mutuality, availability, accessibility, justice and support for multiple loyalties. These are goals for relationship and ingredients that give definition to trustworthiness. As these ingredients become actualized, trust grows.

The process of restoring trust in broken and injured areas of relationship is slow and requires patience. Steps along the way include deepening trust in one's most secure relationships and grounding oneself more firmly in one's communion with God.

Fortified with courage and trust through these efforts, one is in a better position to risk renewed trust investments in one's threatening and wounded relationships. Trust restoring efforts usually begin slowly and grow in strength as mutual desire for reconciliation and deepened relationship is perceived. Helpful ingredients are prayerful preparation, tentative indirect testing, reciprocal communication of felt injustices, repenting and forgiving, discerning capabilities and limitations and negotiating next steps.

BASIC DEFINITIONS

Spiritual and psychological nourishment and growth depend on trust. Trust enables bonding and commitment in primary relationships through which essential giving and receiving occurs. "Trust is required as an initial investment in relationships, after which a person can take further steps toward trust building" (Nagy and Krasner, 1980)

The concepts developed in this paper, draw on the work of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (Nagy and Spark, 1973) and his colleagues, Barbara Krasner and Margaret Cotroneo (1979). Prayerful consideration of Nagy's pioneering explorations of the nature of trust dynamics in close relationships have been a primary catalyst for this author's reflections on trust development.

At the beginning of life, from conception, trust - confident reliance on another - seems to be a gift of instinctive dependence upon parents for basic nurturance. One inherently trusts one's progenitors. Trust then grows through trustworthy exchange or is destroyed through unreliability, betrayal or chronic unrecognized injustice, as seems to occur even during intrauterine life (Verny and Kelly, 1982; Spezzano, 1981).

Trust is not a feeling per se, although the feeling of trust, if in right order, reflects a readiness or expectancy of trustworthy exchange. Trust is more total than feeling. It is an organism expectancy of reliable, nourishing, fair relationship.

Trustworthy primary relationships - repeated giving and receiving that is fair, safe and nourishing in one's primary familial and friendship contexts - nourish basic trust (Erickson, 1959). Trust accrues from the merit of trustworthy encounters. Basic trust is born of experience in trustworthy primary relationships and becomes an inner psychological atmosphere or expectancy that goes with the individual into untested situations. Basic trust frees the person to risk responding openly and with anticipation of trustworthy experience in relationships, yet untested.

The breakdown of trustworthy relationships is a primary factor in the genesis of psychological and spiritual instability and stress. Furthermore, restoring trustworthy relating is a primary means of enabling psychological and spiritual healing and well-being. Persons are essentially and existentially interdependent, requiring living and trustworthy relatedness to other persons (including the Persons of the Trinity) and to life energies in nature for healthful emotional, psychological and spiritual life.

To illustrate, John recently ingested an overdose of Sominex. He says that when he did, he wanted to end his life. Now he is embarrassed by his actions, he still feels that his life is of little value. "Even though I'm embarrassed, I wish I had succeeded." John prefers to handle the stress and pain of his life

alone. He protects others from knowing the emotional suffering and burden he feels and thereby protects himself from further disappointment. Isolation has become his habitual strategy for handling deep distress.

At age 18 John has already lost touch with the longing for trusted relationship. He uses phrases like, "I don't care" and "I just want to get out and get away," when describing his family relationships. John's parents obviously love him. They feel concern and affection for him. Yet, in their presence and in the presence of his siblings, he often feels insignificant. These relationships have become untrustworthy for him. There has been a breakdown of mutual care and mutual recognition of care giving. Differences are not resolved fairly. Family members feel dominated by each other's life interests. John feels undefended in the family, so, "Why invest anymore in my family relationships?" Yet, he is heavily burdened with unresolved family pain and depleted by a deficit of trust which cripples him from leaving the confines of his parents daily care and establishing a life outside his immediate family circle.

If John and his parents and siblings can examine the ways in which they wound each other, and care for each other, and act on their latent longing for intimacy and fairness among themselves and free each other from the current mire of hopelessness.

In terms of the psychology of the individual, the crisis of broken trust, a reflection of the breakdown of trustworthy relationship, is manifest in repetitive internal conflict, hopelessness leading to despair, self-hatred, fears of different degrees, anxiety, panic, terror and paranoia. Intrapsychic breakdown, mental, emotional and spiritual, often reflects breakdown of trustworthy relationship.

The following two illustrations link individual psychological symptoms to the breakdown of trustworthy relationship:

1. A sensitive child, who feels keenly her parent's insecurities, gradually finds her relationship to that parent an untrustworthy context for testing her own viewpoint. If the child is unable to find a way, with her parent, of expressing herself, she will internalize her parent's insecure reactions - as a means of controlling her own responses - and become burdened with conflict. Her life strivings, including her perception of what is just and fair, will become compulsively undercut by opposing interior reactions which are loyal to her parent's sense of comfort. As the child struggles to accommodate her parent's fragile esteem, what began as an untrustworthy exchange becomes a deep distrust of self, "I am inherently destructive in my own nature," and a hatred of her own life.

2. A young man, age 25, lacks confidence in his capabilities. He so doubts his capability to successfully negotiate independent living and gainful employment that he repeatedly scuttles all familial attempts to help him learn to care for himself and develop marketable skills. A powerful inertia controls his life, reinforced by entrenched parental guilt over the conditions of his early life. He was conceived unexpected and unwanted, when his next oldest sibling was 13. His early life was marked with loneliness. He was frequently left by himself while his parents separately left home for the day, running from each other and from responsibility for his life. Unable to establish trustworthy nurturant exchanges with either parent, he fed himself incessantly on any food he could find and attached himself mentally to a continuous diet of television viewing. Emotionally bereft, and relationally untrained, he succumbed to psychotic episodes and other regressive patterns during adolescence. END INDENT

Trustworthiness is a property of relationship rather than of a single individual. As Nagy and Krasner state (1980), "the result of mutual consideration and actual exchange, trustworthiness is always a relational property of at least two people and cannot be reduced to the psychological universe of either one of them. Although it interlocks with the concept of basic trust as a psychological characteristic, trustworthiness always results from multilateral investment of relating partners on behalf of their mutual welfare and life interests Moreover, trustworthiness enables ego strength to be invested in controlling one's tendencies toward an exploitative misuse of close relationships and ultimately serves self-interest through maintaining the relational resource."

Use of the term trustworthy to identify a person's individual character can be misleading, for such attribution focuses attention on the individual and away from the concrete reality of specific relationships that require specific accountabilities. Trustworthiness must be worked out in each relationship and each relationship system.

Trustworthiness is a property of close and enduring relationships. It refers to the fact of repeated, consistent trustable relating. It grows as memories of safety, mutual care and reciprocal calling forth become an abiding interior resource of relating partners. As relating partners repeatedly choose to invest in each other's well being and to care for their relationship, a sustaining atmosphere of hope develops. Trustworthy habits of interrelating, including especially capacities to embrace differences and bridge moments of antipathy and felt injustice, become conditioned responses to mutual presence.

As trustworthiness develops, relating partners find themselves trusting many aspects of their relationship; trusting their abilities to nourish each other and to stimulate each other's growth; trusting each other's integrity, trusting their own integrity in each other's presence and trusting each other to trust the other's integrity; trusting their mutual intention to reconcile breaches of fairness, misunderstandings, inequities, etc.

The ever deeper trust investments that enable growing trustworthiness in human relating are rooted in and nourished by the indwelling presence and protection of the Trinity. The actual safety and sustenance of God's presence and abiding care are the invisible partners to any human investment, because of the inherent imperfections of all human relating. An increasingly open channel to God's Grace is the hidden resource of inestimable value in fashioning any enduring trust.

The above definitions and assumptions provide foundation for examining essential ingredients of close relationships. Next we will describe aspects of relationship that build trustworthiness. These are properties or ingredients that relationships must be trusted for. Then we will look at specific strategies for restoring trustworthy relating in relationships which manifest suspicion, breakdown of mutuality and stagnant (stuck) relating.

What must relationships be trusted for? If relationships are to be and become safe for mutual life, what are essential ingredients of safety that breed trust? It is these same ingredients whose absence or destruction foster isolation and hopelessness.

INGREDIENTS OF TRUSTWORTHY RELATIONSHIP

These ingredients are grouped under five headings: 1) mutuality; 2) availability; 3) accessibility; 4) justice; and 5) support for multiple loyalties. These categories are not given as exhaustive or as the only way of ordering the data of relationship. They represent one way of viewing some of the basic properties of trustworthy relationship systems.

Mutuality

The most fundamental property of trustworthy relationship is mutuality of commitment to caring for each other and for the relationship. Mutuality denotes that the relationship is mutually chosen and therefore the mutual responsibility of all parties to it. Most relationships require one-sided giving for periods of time, yet, in the long run, trustworthiness cannot be maintained without mutual and reciprocal care taking and mutual concern for the well being of the relationship.

A sense of oneness in a relationship is partly the reflection of mutuality. This sense derives from the common commitment to each other and to the relationship.

Mutuality of caring and commitment is enormously strengthening to persons. One can rest in shared accountability for the relationship and be relieved of the emotional burden that one-sided accountability promotes. Feeling the other's initiative and concern to maintain the relationship, to right wrongs, etc., allows one to entrust oneself more completely and to risk differences and confrontations. One is freed to sink more deeply into the relationship, giving and receiving with greater ease, because of the sense of binding together that grows through shared commitment.

While the quality of mutuality seems more readily applicable to relationships between co-equals, e.g., friends, it is equally essential to trustworthiness between parents and children. For a relationship to grow in trustworthiness, investments of all parties is essential. While children depend, initially, on the one-sided giving and unconditional commitment of their parents, real friendship is formed as reciprocity is fashioned. Close examination of interaction among newly born children and their parents reveals that such reciprocity develops quite early. Young children, operating within the capacities of their age, strive to reciprocate caring. Adults often fail to perceive the age-appropriate ways in which children care for their relationships to their parents.

The other ingredients discussed here are to be viewed in the context of mutuality. They describe the nature of mutual commitments and initiatives that create trustworthiness in close relationships. One should ask how one gives, claims and receives these ingredients.

Availability

Relationships require mutual and ongoing availability. Persons must be willing to claim and provide personal presence. Essential aspects of availability are mental and emotional presence and reliability.

Mental and emotional presence: Trustworthiness requires mental and emotional presence, a presence that is open to engaging the life interests of the other. Availability is most essentially the psychic and spiritual intention and capacity to be present to concerns of the other. To say, “I am available to you” is to be offering to concentrate my spiritual, psychic and physical energies to support what is life enhancing for you.

Physical presence is usually one’s vehicle for mental and spiritual availability. Mere physical presence, however, is no guarantee of trustworthy encounter. We all know the damaging effects of interacting with someone who is continually preoccupied with self, easily distracted or emotionally blocked from committing energy to understanding one’s interior perspective.

Reliability: Reliability refers to dependable presence that persists over time, a demonstration of commitment to be present “in sickness and health.” This is an availability that can be counted on when claimed. Reliability does not imply continuous or even frequent availability. It refers rather to the consistency of personal presence when claimed and to a certain consistency of initiatives over a long period of time; i.e., making oneself available to the other’s concerns, consistently.

Each relationship must have its own understanding of the degree and conditions of availability that are appropriate and essential to it. For example, a marriage has different requirements than a non-spousal friendship. Reliability can be evaluated only in relation to the inherent requirements of the relationship worked out over time through mutual discernment and negotiation.

Other facets of reliability include: consistent crisis availability, assurance of future availability, and future availability given as promised.

Consistent crisis availability is the willingness to make the other’s need a priority, especially when he/she is in crisis. I remember vividly when school authorities called to inform my wife and I that our son was in the nurse’s office at school, having just been physically beaten by several neighborhood boys outside the school. We were grateful that we were home at the time and thus could rush to pick him up. There was some forty-five minutes delay between the time he was attacked and our arrival. Yet, I am confident that our ability to be reached and to drop our current preoccupation and attend immediately to his need, countered his fear and made the world just a little more trustworthy for him.

Assurance of future availability is the mutual commitment to future availability which grants freedom in the moment to confront unreconciled issues which may cause temporary alienation. A lived and tested commitment to future availability directly speaks to fear that “the wrong word” or a “hard word” will permanently rupture ties.

Future availability given as promised points to the trusted word as an essential ingredient of relationship. Where would we be if God, our eternal Parent, suddenly decided to change His mind on His promises. We would experience betrayal and only reluctantly believe again. Scripture recognizes the need for trusted and trustworthy words in emphasizing over and over that God is faithful to His promises. The Old Testament is replete with the use of memories of God being faithful to His word in the past, words used as an antidote to the blindness and short memory that overtook Israel (and overtakes each of us) in times of stress and suffering.

So often parents promise more availability to their children, in moments of feeling guilty, than they can or intend to fulfill. Such action erodes the child’s trust in the spoken word and in the relationship. The short term benefit of guilt assuaged by false or otherwise ill fated promises pales in benefit compared to the relational value of more limited promises that can actually be counted upon.

Accessibility

Trustworthy relationship requires mutual accessibility to each other’s convictions, longings, limitations, doubts, wounds and especially to each other’s experience of the relationship. Mutual understanding is founded in accessibility. Fairness in relationship requires mutual accessibility to each other’s experience of assets and liabilities, wounding and nourishing, in the relationship. Mutual concern requires mutual access to each other’s limitations, longings and other life interests. Accessibility enables clarity and consistency, enhances mutual growth and allows care for each partner’s safety by enabling direct attention to woundedness and other real limitations.

Children grow in trust through accessible and sturdy convictions and limits of those in whose charge

they live. Adults rely on the accessibility of parents, siblings, and friends who reveal their convictions as well as their uncertainties, doubts, ambivalences, longings and are open to questioning. In dialogue with the convictions, doubts, ambivalences, etc. of others, one grows into one's own convictions and self-understanding. In exposing one's convictions, uncertainties, etc. to another, one is opened to further truth. We are each authored through others who are willing and able to stand and expose their stand, especially their side of the relationship.

Mutual accessibility relies on a shared sense of entitlement to being and becoming in each other's presence. Such a sense of entitlement is rooted most essentially in our Creator's calling us to life and is reinforced by those primary others who have been available to our life interests with genuine concern. Further, the experience of mutual availability as defined above, enhances one's sense of entitlement to be accessible and claim accessibility in the particular relationship.

Accessibility also depends on confidentiality. One cannot tolerate opening vulnerable areas of self unless there is strict understanding of what must be limited to the relationship. Demonstrated honoring of each partner's wishes regarding what is to be kept in confidence, frees deeper levels of personal exposure.

Accessibility, as defined here, involves articulating personal perceptions and convictions; exposing personal limitations and openness to questioning, dialogue and negotiation without rigid exclusion.

Articulating personal perceptions and convictions: Accessibility requires a mutual struggle to articulate personal perceptions and convictions. Reliance on someone else's standards or perceptions, personally untested and unintegrated, can never form the basis for a trustworthy partnership. Partners in building trustworthy exchange must struggle to stay in the "I am" of personal convictions and uncertainties. Hiding in each other's apparent convictions or a third party's position precludes direct meeting and assures future confusing and felt betrayal, when unarticulated desires, convictions, perceptions, etc. surface indirectly. A husband and wife recently explained to me the chaos and distrust wrought in their relationship as a result of "pseudomutual" discussion in which one partner would falsely agree with the other in order to avoid temporary conflict. Conflict born of direct expression of true differences of perception, valuing, etc. provides the basis for trustworthy negotiation that can never be achieved through pseudomutuality.

Exposing personal limitations: Mutual accessibility to each other's personal limitations is essential for building trustworthy exchange. Mutual claims must be conditioned by each partner's present limitations. If one partner's woundedness incapacitates their creative, receptive response, e.g., to an intense raised voice, then such a limitation must be honored by all parties if the relationship is to be trustworthy for genuine dialogue.

Openness to questioning, dialogue and negotiation without rigid exclusion: To be accessible is to open oneself to questioning, dialogue and negotiation. This is another way of saying that true accessibility manifests a willingness to change, that is born of listening to another and opening to the truth coming through the other. It is one's intimacy with God, with the Inner Creative Resource, that frees one to be both authoritative and open. Resting in one's call and entitlement to bear convictions and perceptions, allows one to change without losing hold. Listening to God's voice within oneself and through the other as one opens to the embrace (not endorse) the other's experiencing is a way of moment to moment "rerooting" as one's position is changed through genuine encounter.

Justice

Relationships flounder for lack of someone assuming responsibility for seeing that fairness is fought for, that the merits of each person's side are acknowledged and wrongs and inequities are addressed. Managing justice includes multidirectional advocacy, repairing action, consideration of limitations and differences, and reciprocity.

Multidirectional advocacy: Such advocacy calls for the fair hearing of each person's side in a relationship or a relationship system. Only through mutual and reciprocal advocacy can approximate fairness come to light. One becomes acutely aware of one's own contribution to a "stuck" and injured relationship when required to temporarily side with the other who one sees as "the" guilty party. Advocating for a fair hearing of the other as well as oneself builds an atmosphere of rest and safety.

Repairing action: This includes specific confession of fault, apology, and redress and specific confession of woundedness and acts of forgiveness and mercy. Specific here refers to definition of and action on whatever in particular has been harmful, hurtful or unfair and what in particular might be corrective or accomplish redress. Trustworthiness grows as each party to a relationship takes responsibility for repairing action.

Consideration of limitations and differences: Considering personal limitations and differences among

persons is essential for fair consideration and treatment. Because of differing stages of development, differing aptitudes for perceiving and expressing and differing weaknesses, no two persons can be treated fairly and treated alike. Differences among family members in ability to quickly assess and express their own sense of injury is an illustration of this. An extroverted person may quickly describe how he/she has been hurt. An introverted person may need solitude and gentle drawing out to come to an articulate sense of her/his own side. An extroverted person may tend to compound unfairness, even while trying to mend a rift, by demanding too much expression too quickly. The introverted person, if not understood as different in “way,” will be viewed as withholding and punished for not participating. Likewise, a very young child will not be able to stand up to the quick reasoning of his or her teenage sibling. The very process of surfacing each side to a conflict can then have its own injustices, if parties to a relationship do not find a way of protecting weaker or less articulate members, while still holding them accountable for their part. A relationship system cannot finally be trustworthy if one person remains at a permanent disadvantage for whatever reason.

Reciprocity: This refers to mutual attempts to balance giving and receiving. The impulse to balance giving and receiving is inherent in close relationships. The drive to reciprocate reflects the fact of indebtedness that grows in close relationships, because of their creative and life sustaining nature. The releasing power of gratitude expressed and received points to this inherent need to reciprocate. Gratitude is a giving in return through appreciation. Reciprocity in no way implies, necessarily, returning in kind. Reciprocal giving and receiving are creative acts. One gives to another out of one’s own nature into the particular life interests and concerns of the other. Likewise, one receives from another into one’s own nature that which is nourishing and sustaining of their unique being. To fully receive from another, one must apprehend and be nourished by what he or she is able to give.

In families the spontaneous, unsolicited giving of children often goes unrecognized and unreceived, because it comes in the child’s terms. A young man related to me the following illustration. As a child he once spontaneously picked a rose from the garden as a present for his mother. He rushed to his house abandoned in anticipation of pleasing her. His mother reacted with anger, punishing him for disturbing her flowers. The son felt deeply wounded. In response to this type of interchange he came to view his own motives and giving impulses as untrustworthy, even evil, and came to hate and mistrust his mother’s self-protective, self-centered actions.

Also, reciprocity in no way implies achieving perfect balance. Rather it refers to an active, dynamic process of rebalancing giving and receiving in the ongoing flow of the relationship. What is destructive to relationship is persistent, unacknowledged, one-sided giving or persistent blocks to receiving and giving. Long standing inequities that continue unaddressed and unreconciled leave persons feeling used, unappreciated and taken for granted on the one hand or guilt ridden, selfish, and ashamed on the other.

Persistent ingratitude - failing to gratefully acknowledge what one has received from others that is creative and sustaining in one’s life - is a particularly destructive attitude in our day. Bernard Haring (1982), in a recent paper addressing the healing ministry of the church, wrote the following insightful comment on gratitude.

So many people are sick, malcontent, restless and rootless because they have never learned or known the power of gratitude; gratefulness implants us in tradition and makes us recipients of all the wealth of the past as it comes down to us from God, Our Creator and Redeemer, and from those people who invested goodness, wisdom, justice, creative liberty and fidelity in [our] history. It is a sad situation indeed if the Church fails to help believers discover how ‘rendering thanks always and everywhere’ offers a hope-filled thrust in approaching life’s problems and adversity as well as in using God’s wonderful gifts. Without gratitude, our relationship to God can never be healthy and healing; we will never discover our inner resources or those of others if we fail to acknowledge gratefully God’s gifts and show gratitude to our fellow travelers on this earthly pilgrimage.

Support for Multiple Loyalties

This dimension of relationship recognizes that each person needs to relate in a positive to each significant person in their life. Conflicting loyalties create inner tension, ambivalent action, fear and wavering commitments. Jealousy fosters guilt in the other by setting up the reality that relating positively to one person will cause tension in one’s relationship to another.

This dimension of relationship is most critical in one’s relationship to one’s parents. One’s rootedness in and consequent indebtedness to these two persons make continued mutual exchange with both essential to

one's life. The only deeper loyalty and relatedness is found in one's relationship to the Trinity. Imagine the inner turmoil if Father, Son and Holy Spirit suddenly lost their oneness of heart and love for each other. We would literally be divided and shattered inside. I doubt any of us could stand to live, our fear and guilt would be so great. Being loyal to Jesus would be at risk of being held guilty by the Father. Fortunately, our God is three persons in one. Loving the Son is an act of loving the Father.

While the need for positive relatedness to both parents is most critical, this dimension includes advocacy for all of the person's significant relationships. Friends are trustworthy for each other by supporting each other's other friendships. Spouses are trustworthy for each other by supporting each other's relationships with families of origin and with friends. Parents are trustworthy for their children when they encourage and help them relate to their grandparents, siblings and friends.

STEPS TOWARD RESTORING TRUSTWORTHY RELATIONSHIP

The ingredients of relationship described above create trustworthy relationships when lived and received. These ingredients were described as goals to aim for. As stated, they are suggestive of steps one might take to increase safety and diminish fear in any committed relationships. However, further discussion may help one step across the bridge from perceived helplessness and powerlessness to the renewed courage and confidence needed to risk and negotiate these relationship initiatives.

In this section assumptions important to trust restoring action are stated first. Then steps which can be applied to close, committed relationships are detailed. These steps are addressed to adults. While the essential concepts are applicable to relationships with children, the specific terms assume adult capacities.

Assumptions

First, it is important to keep in mind that restoring trustworthy relationship is a process that takes time. Trust is usually broken gradually. Even though certain traumas, certain breaches of confidence, have an especially powerful effect, they often draw their severe impact from previous unhealed injuries and insecurities. What has been broken slowly is generally repaired slowly. Impatience is common for the one seeking to re-establish his/her credibility as a trustworthy partner. If one has genuinely repented and been changed, it is frustrating to continue receiving hesitancy, wariness and unforgiveness from the other. Yet, trust grows slowly as changes are experienced, tested and become memory.

Second, the process of restoring trustworthy relationship is always reciprocal requiring the injured one's forgiveness and willingness to "see" anew. Memories of injury and betrayal must be replaced with memories of genuine presence and care. Repentance and patience can be strengthened through deepening identification with the inner experiencing of the injured other as well as by facing squarely one's own sinful capacities. Patience is also required of one seeking to trust again, who must guard against applying harmful pressure to him/herself, pressure which can lead to premature over-exposure. Resistance to trusting again becomes an ally for reconciliation only when patiently called forth to speak its truth.

Third, at root, restoring trustworthy relationship rests in each partner's ongoing reciprocity of love with God. The freedom to negotiate and test reciprocal love with others, is founded in God's free gift of love to us, given concretely anew in each moment. His love is the enabling ground of all personal freedom, that is, of all capacity to transcend the determinism of past experiences (especially past betrayals) and to risk and test renewed vision of trustworthy relationship. God's work of forgiving love, spoken into our hearts and received, is our freeing and generative ground and our model, releasing and guiding our own loving initiatives. This is true whether His grace is appropriated in the solitude of time apart, in our contacts with nature or through the loving presence of another human being.

Further, His love is the protection appropriated as we risk trustworthy initiatives into the unknown of our present and future relationship with another. And it is loving Him, returning His love through loving others that sustains and completes all human love.

Fourth, one must begin restoring trustworthy relationship by getting in touch with one's relational resources. Who does one trust and how? With whom does one feel safe? How is love given and received in the relationship with which one is concerned? What is one already capable of risking? For what does one have courage? Trust development begins with the discovery and exercising of resources for trusting and loving which already exist.

Fifth, trust development must be founded in truth. Superficial repentance or quick forgiveness, which evade deeper more humiliating confrontation with one's sin or avoid a more accurate exposure of one's woundedness, cannot provide the basis of renewed trust. The roots of broken trust must be exposed to the light and steps must be taken in the context of the real injuries, injustices, betrayals, misunderstandings, etc.

An Outline of Action Steps

Based on these assumptions, the following steps outline trust restoring initiatives. These steps are given in a particular sequence for ease of explanation. They should be considered, however, as mutually reinforcing initiatives in a dynamic relational process rather than as occurring in a strict sequence.

Deepening trust in one's most secure relationships: It is in risking greater vulnerability in already somewhat safe relationships that one can grow in basic trust, courage, healing and insight needed for renewed initiatives in one's more broken relationships. Especially, when basic trust has been severely fractured, approaching one's most wounding primary relationships to initiate rebuilding of trustworthy exchange may be too traumatic a beginning. The mutuality of woundedness in primary relationships fosters repeated injuries because each partner's fears and negative expectations are experienced by the other as rejection. Increasing trustworthiness in a relationship in which one has already invested trust, offers the potential of increasing basic trust, courage and confidence that can then be invested in one's more threatening primary relationships.

One should begin with the question, "With whom do I feel most safe?" Therapy relationships serve this bridging function; so also do support groups and friendships. In the safety and sanctuary of such relationships one can test new levels of exposure. In particular, one can gradually surface one's fears and wounds and confess sins committed in other relationships. Directly exposing one's pain to another who hears without condemnation and comes to understand one's side is healing and strengthening. The pain of aloneness is assuaged. One's sense of integrity is strengthened. Courage to be vulnerable in truth grows. One grows in clarity of one's convictions and one's blindness and limitations.

In the safety of growing trust born of tested vulnerability, one can risk negotiating and testing the giving and receiving of the different ingredients of relationship described in the previous section. Reaching out to another for compassionate listening is claiming availability.

In therapy, clients will negotiate with me specific strategies for my availability when they are in crisis. A specific structure that can be used and tested, such as phone calls at a certain mutually determined time of day, can significantly diminish the terror of walking through moments of chaotic and erupting emotions. Such a negotiation also offers the person a chance to practice caring for me by being respectful and supportive of my other loyalties.

Also, in the context of deepening trust and mutual understanding, one can give and receive prayers for healing of wounds sustained in other relationships. Bathing memories of wounding experiences in prayer, calling forth the healing presence of Jesus, and importuning God for the grace of a forgiving and understanding heart are powerful preparations for trust restoring initiatives.

Deepening one's communion with God: Restoring and deepening trust in human relationship depends on increasing appropriation of God's love, just as the faith to believe in the possibility of greater intimacy with God is enabled by deepening trust in a human relationship. Growing in trustworthy relating to God is given here as a second step because many persons need the hope given through the tangible trustworthiness of a human relationship to catch a glimpse of God's love for them. The transcendent love of God becomes visible first through the caring initiative of another person.

The following steps are helpful in strengthening a sense of trustworthy exchange with God: remembering one's salvation history, engaging in dialogue prayer, identifying one's wounds with the wounds of Jesus, opening to God's presence in moments of injury.

Remembering One's salvation history is described and developed by John English (1978) in his book, *Choosing Life*. It is a process of "re-membering" one's consciousness with one's own experiences of God's saving action. In scripture God frequently encourages His people in the face of their fears by reminding them of His saving deeds. Such remembering prepares one to perceive and trust His presence in each new moment.

A corollary activity is recalling ways in which one has reciprocated God's love, through worship and through loving oneself and one's friends and family. It is encouraging to become aware of how one has been trustworthy with God's love.

Engaging in dialogue prayer means speaking one's side to God, one's pain, joy, anger, gratitude, despair, and then waiting and listening for God's response through images, feelings, thoughts or in the events of the day. Such dialogue can be written, spoken aloud or simply spoken in one's imagination. In written dialogue one writes out god's response as one senses an inner prompting. In this process one allows God to become the "safe" other who is available to really listen. Waiting and allowing the Spirit to respond through one's writing or one's imagination can give one a real sense of God's immediate presence and deep

caring.

Identifying one's wounds with the wounds of Jesus, with specific wounding that Jesus suffered, can enable one to grow in trusting God's empathy, His understanding, based in His own, similar, human experience. The intent here is to open oneself to God saying, "I know, I have experienced this too."

Then one can exercise reciprocal love, loving in return. Here one uses one's own suffering as a source of understanding and compassion for the suffering of Jesus. One imagines oneself loving Jesus in His moments of suffering.

Opening to God's presence in moments of injury, as one draws closer to Jesus, one can begin to lighten memories that have been encumbered with despair, rejection and fear. Here one asks Jesus to come into a specific memory and to show just how He was present and loving in the moment of one's hurting and suffering. In most of our moments of being wounded, we have been so focused on the power of the person hurting us that we have temporarily lost consciousness of God's presence. In so doing we have failed to see the possibility of turning to Him. A critical step in restoring trust to any broken relationship is becoming conscious of God's presence and availability to us in the original moments of injury. Then we can, in some sense, relive the moment choosing to turn to God for help. In seeing God's presence, one can begin to glimpse one's responsibility in an injury. There is a choice where previously there seemed to be none. One can turn to God's presence in the moment and in His presence begin to find the strength to stand one's ground, to stay in the "I am" of one's integrity, refusing to be taken over by the condemning, rejecting, abandoning energies of the other or by the vengeful energies surging within oneself.

Restoring trustworthiness in broken areas of a relationship: Fortified with growing trust, courage and knowledge of love, one can edge towards trust restoring actions with significant others in areas of relating that are unreconciled. The steps focused here are prayerful preparation, tentative indirect testing, reciprocal communication of felt injustices, repenting and forgiving, discerning capabilities and limitations and negotiating next steps.

Prayerful preparation for meeting by asking Jesus to be with oneself and the other, even to go before to prepare the atmosphere and each person to really hear the other, is a powerful invitation to the Holy Spirit to creatively govern your exchange with another. See Him preparing the place where you will likely meet. Picture Him with you and the other as you project your meeting (or hear His voice through your thoughts or sense His presence through your feelings if you are more adept at imagining in these modes). Actively seeking His presence through imagination can help one let go, leaving the protection of self and the other largely to Him and trusting the Holy Spirit to bring forth the spontaneous expressions that produce real communion. By imagining Jesus with oneself and the other as a future meeting is projected, one is preparing a place in one's heart and mind for Him when the meeting occurs.

For example, I can mentally picture Jesus with my mother and myself. He has His hand upon her heart and seems to be telling me not to worry so much about hurting her. He will protect her heart and help her to hear what she needs to hear of what I am saying. Even when one is actually present with another, Jesus' presence can be actively imagined (visualized, felt or thought). The preparatory imaginings mentioned above are excellent preconditioning for seeing, feeling and thinking His presence when one is physically with another. Such imaginings help to open oneself in the moment to the securing presence of the Holy Spirit and to the mind of Christ for that moment. With such a practice one's perceptions are enlarged and deepened.

Tentative indirect testing occurs as persons reinvest trust gradually, subtly testing the relational waters. Tentative gestures of giving and receiving in relatively safe areas of relating enable mutual assessment of each other's current attitudes, intentions and desires for restoring trust. Indirect movements into renewed contact are often essential, given the deep personal vulnerabilities at play. Direct conversation about areas of woundedness or commitment to reconciliation may be constructive only after less direct testing. Premature directness in vulnerable areas can be unnecessarily frightening and call forth guilt reactions and defensiveness that abort renewed trust or simply mislead persons regarding each other's actual desire for deepening relationship. As persons become comfortable with each other's intentions, the way is opened for direct expression of desire for deepened trust.

Remembering positive history, that is restoring to mutual consciousness positive memories of giving and receiving and of shared experience, enables a rekindling of gratitude for the relationship and a sense of its mutual value. Such remembering, openly expressed, strengthens each person's confidence in his or her value to the other and nurtures trust in the other's intentions. Such 'remembering' of consciousness with positive history often occurs spontaneously as an instinctive preparation for surfacing difficult issues or otherwise risking increased vulnerability. A context of mutual affirmation is being prepared wherein hurts

and discontents can be examined without losing a broader more complete perspective on the relationship.

Reciprocal communication of felt injustices can free a relationship for reconciling action and mutual accountability. It can also revitalize fears and retributive actions. Such direct communication is always a critical doorway to trustworthy relationship. Relationships cannot grow in trustworthiness without the increasing capacity of each partner to hear the other's grievances with respect and to communicate felt injuries and inequities directly from the "I" position ("I am _____," "I perceive _____," "I sense _____"). Making oneself truly available to understanding and identifying with the other's grievances, when they relate to one's own actions, letting the truth of one's own insensitivity and unfairness come to light, is a primary task in trustworthy relating. Growing trustworthiness requires the gradually expanding capacity for such reciprocal address and mutual understanding.

Close relationships are often invested with reactions displaced from other relationships. Any constructive sharing of felt injustices must include an openness to seeing such displacement. Attempts at reconciliation bog down and even add injury when perceptions and emotions are fused and confused with those belonging to other relationships. For example, spouses hold each other accountable for motives and injuries experienced with parents. Differentiating one's spouse from one's parent is critical to building trust in the marriage and facing injuries that truly belong to the marriage. Negotiating this difficult terrain often takes the presence and facilitation of a mutually trusted third party.

Repenting and forgiving flow naturally from mutual understanding. Given the new awarenesses and changes of heart which grow in the milieu of direct address, each person can risk articulating what he or she is ready to repent of and to forgive. The focus here is on each being specific about what one is ready and able to repent of and to forgive rather than struggling to promise or demand complete change of attitude and behavior or complete forgiveness.

Discerning capabilities and limitations focuses attention on what is possible and what is not possible at the present time. For example, in a therapy session a husband said to his wife, "I am not capable of listening to you when you are yelling at me. But I can hold you when you're feeling fearful if you will let me know that you need me." The wife replied, "I can learn to tell you that I want you to hold me but I can't yet stand up to you when you are telling me that I shouldn't be feeling what I'm feeling."

This process of sharing can be further enhanced by each partner trying to articulate how they now are able to receive caring from the other.

Negotiating next steps brings good intentions to the level of concrete action. Given mutual understanding of capabilities and limitations, commitments to specific efforts at giving and receiving can be made. In making commitments it is important that each person agree to only what he or she is in fact willing to do. In a situation of rebuilding trust, it is better to commit to small steps that will be accomplished or at least tried rather than to big steps that will be avoided and therefore further erode trust.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Trust is the fruit of trustworthy relationship. Basic trust accrues as trustworthiness grows in one's primary relationships. Initial investments of trust in any relationship, enable the creative mingling of positive giving and receiving which, undergirded and infused by the grace of God, enhances the trustworthiness of the relationship and each person's capacity for trusting.

Trustworthy relationships tend to multiply trust investments in other relationships. A sturdy base of safe, secure and tested relationship encourages risk vulnerability in less secure relationships. This is partly a consequence of the non-possessive nature of trustworthiness.

Breakdowns of trustworthy relating, especially in primary relationships, promotes manifold psychological symptoms, fear, conflict, self-condemnation, despair, and depression. Conversely, restoring trustworthy relationship is an essential means for healing psychological imbalances and brokenness.

Attributes of trustworthy relating include mutuality, availability, accessibility, justice and support for relationship and ingredients that give definition to trustworthiness. As these ingredients become actualized, trust grows.

The process of restoring trust in broken and injured areas of relationship is slow and requires patience. Steps along the way include deepening trust in one's most secure relationships and grounding oneself more firmly in one's communion with God.

Fortified with courage and trust through these efforts, one is in a better position to risk renewed trust investments in one's more threatening and wounded relationships. Trust restoring efforts usually begin slowly and grow in strength as mutual desire for reconciliation and deepened relationship is perceived. Helpful ingredients are prayerful preparation, tentative indirect testing, reciprocal communication of felt

injustices, repenting and forgiving, discerning capabilities and limitations and negotiating next steps.

All efforts to restore trust rest in the grace of God. Transcending the narrowing and isolating effects of previous wounds by hoping for new beginnings and reimagining the possibilities inherent in a relationship, is evidence of an interior infusion of the Holy Spirit's creative power. Risking renewed trust investments in contexts of previous misunderstanding or betrayal is buoyed by the sense that one is participating in the life of God and therefore deepening one's spiritual union as one risks human reunion. The protection and nudging of grace draws us into the deep and turbulent waters of renewing human communion. In the depths of renewed human communion can be seen the healing of the broken Body of Christ.

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