

TRUST

"I could be whatever I wanted to be if I trusted that music, that song, that vibration of God that was inside of me."
~Shirley MacLaine

I often hear people telling me that they should learn to be more trusting. I have wondered what they mean. Does it mean that although our trust in others has been betrayed repeatedly, and we now feel distrustful, that this is wrong and we should go backwards and learn to trust people despite all evidence we have accumulated in our lives that people are untrustworthy?

In fifty years of living I have no evidence that would suggest to me that the vast majority of people are to be trusted at all times to be loving, kind, patient, accepting, non judgmental, gentle, pure in motive, genuinely giving honest, wise or compassionate and even when they seem to be - it is just that - a pretense with hidden motives of self interest. It seems to me that to "trust" other people is denial or naiveté. The naive trust of childhood must be replaced with distrust of others - it indicates awareness.

However, learning to not trust others does not mean becoming cynical, caustic, embittered, hostile and angry that the world cannot be trusted. Paranoia, suspicion, searching for dark hidden motives in others, not accepting what is given by others graciously, is merely the flip side of naiveté. Neither of these attitudes serve us well and both are rooted in fear. Both represent black and white thinking - people are either good or bad, with no recognition that people are essentially loving and that, out of unawareness and fear, act in ways that are not consistent with their true natures, rendering them untrustworthy.

The issue of trust is one that, like everything else, must be addressed internally. The question is not whether we can trust other people, the question is can I trust myself? Can I trust my own perceptions, feelings and beliefs - or am I filled with self doubt? Does my self doubt make me dependently needy and searching for someone to lean on, depend on (trust), or does my self doubt alienate me from others through judgments and projections?

Do the following short exercise - assess for yourself the answers to the following statements?

1. Can I trust my perceptions and notice and name abuse and disrespect from others?
2. Can I speak up for myself and protect myself from disrespect from others?
3. Can I trust myself to do this respectfully, gently and kindly?
4. Can I trust myself to express my opinions, thoughts and interpretations with the humility and
1. openness to learning from others in a conversation?
5. Can I trust myself to not get angry, out of control and judgmental towards others?
6. Can I trust my feelings as indicators that something needs to be examined in myself or others
2. or the situation?
7. Can I trust myself to be non judgmental of myself and others?
8. Can I trust myself to not be flooded with shame, self doubt and regret if criticized or judged?
9. Can I trust myself to be at peace no matter what upsets and turmoil are going on around me?
10. Can I trust myself to feel joy even in the midst of sadness, loss, grief and suffering?
11. Can I trust myself to speak the truth as I understand it no matter the cost to myself?
12. Can I trust myself that I can face life's difficulties with dignity and integrity?
13. Can I trust myself to not give in to fear? Can I trust myself to take risks?
14. Can I trust myself to meet my own emotional needs by examining the source of my pain in my own childhood and being present to them with love and acceptance?
15. Can I trust myself to discern the difference between genuine love and fake caretaking; relative truth for a more embracing Truth, pretend good behavior, for genuine service?
16. Can I trust the essential goodness of myself and others no matter what bad behavior is engaged in?

Clearly there are many more questions one could ask oneself. Once these questions can be answered in the affirmative there will be no need to either trust or not trust others. You will have the wisdom of seeing others clearly without judgment - only with compassion and the right response to every situation. This is freedom. Don't worry about others - learn to become a trustworthy human being yourself © Lyndall Johnson
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