

# Learning to Trust your Partner

If there is one factor that is paramount in relationships today, it's the issue of trust. Without trust to hold on to, we'll find ourselves in relationships that are emotionally unsatisfying. And, in the long run, will probably turn out to be doomed.

But trust can mean different things to different people. For some people, trust might simply mean that their partner isn't going to have sex with someone else. For others, however, trust is something that goes deeper and entails feeling safe and secure with their partner, knowing that they are not going to hurt or betray them.

We've seen that if someone hasn't been hurt by their previous partners, the chances are very good that they're emotionally safe in their relationship. This is common sense. If you haven't been burned before, there's no reason to fear fire, after all. You're able to maintain a sense of "present" in your relationship because you haven't found a reason to dwell upon the past. This doesn't mean that you're walking around with rose-colored glasses, though, and that you think the relationship is going to last forever – simply that when the relationship comes to an end, it won't be because of something as ugly as a betrayal of trust.

But some people come from backgrounds where there have been trust issues. They are going to have a harder time being in a healthy relationship. It's human nature to assume that because one person has done us wrong, others are going to do us wrong as well. What makes things even harder, however, is knowing that in order for a relationship to really grow and flourish, there has to be a foundation of trust. That means you'll have to do whatever it takes to get past any kind of trust barriers that you've erected.

How can you accomplish this?

Simple. First of all, you have to accept that you deserve to be loved. You deserve to be in a relationship that is healthy and strong and is focused on the present and the future, and not on the past. This means that you should probably take some time out from the dating scene after you've been through a bad relationship. You need to have time to heal, time to understand that the person who wronged you is not representative of others who are out there.

Then, you need to move forward.

Whatever you do, don't give the person who hurt you the power to influence your future relationships. When you meet someone new and you think that there might be something going on there, take it slowly at first. Establish a solid foundation of emotions, and gradually allow more and more trust to enter the equation. By starting off a little at a time, the day will come when you and your new partner will both be fully open and receptive to each other. Now your sights will be set squarely on the future, and not upon the past.

Kathy Stafford, Relationship Coach

"I show singles how to get married and couples how to STAY married"

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