

Mentor Instructions: The 6 Character Elements of Trust

This activity on the 6 Character Elements of Trust is the big exercise that you can do with your Mentee in order to:

- Have them understand their overall trust profile, their strengths and challenges
- Compare trust pre-dispositions in different contexts. In the example we have shown we have used work and personal/home life (where we would ask the Mentee to put themselves in the shoes of someone close to them, a partner, child, parent or close friend – and score themselves as if they were that person). However, you might also do it with themselves (how trustworthy are they to themselves), with their team, their boss, a particular social environment, as a leader ... whatever is relevant.
- Use it for them to seek to gain insight into the trust profile of another individual – through how they experience them, and if they also do their own – it will highlight where there are clashes that may be impacting the relationship
- To help the mentee get clear on what they will need to work on in order build their all-round capability across all aspects of the profile.

This session would likely be a follow on from doing the initial reflection questions with the Mentee. Those questions start the process of getting specific Mentee context and inclinations in relation to how they experience trust and trustworthiness. The insight that not everyone values what they might value then becomes the topic of investigation. And through working with this material the Mentee will develop a wider appreciation about what it takes for trust to be cultivated.

Setting Up the Session

Responding to the worksheet is best done by the Mentee as preparation prior to the de-brief session. It is however, useful to show them the 6 Elements – in the star format and explain that each individual has a different trust profile, much the same way as each individual has different values.

- Agree the subjects to be included, as per the second bullet point above. It is not wise to do more than 3, because then it can get very complex. If there are different constituencies it is often better to do a couple of separate rounds with separate debriefs.
- Send a soft copy or make a hard copy for the Mentee.
- Walk through the pages – not in any great detail, but make sure they know the steps to follow and that the final document will have a completed chart for each element and also a summary of the averages chart for an overview.
- Encourage the Mentee to put aside quiet time to work through the material. Not to overthink it though but to go with their initial gut response on each question. It is detailed and it is better to keep the process sharp and moving.
- If they wish to have another person complete a copy about how they experience them, this is also helpful as it will provide a contrasting perspective. This can however be quite a high gradient thing to do – particularly when there are big discrepancies between how the Mentee and how their evaluator sees the trust dynamic. It may then end up being more challenging for yourself as the mentor, and it does need a degree of openness and maturity and of course honesty on the part of the person asked to complete the exercise.
- Agree a time horizon, and whether you would like to see the document in advance of the debrief or not. This can be helpful as it gives more opportunity for preparation, however, also working in the moment in a dynamic fashion and exploring the results together can also be very impactful.
- Invite the Mentee to make notes of their insights or questions – as these are positive fodder for the conversation.

The De-Brief

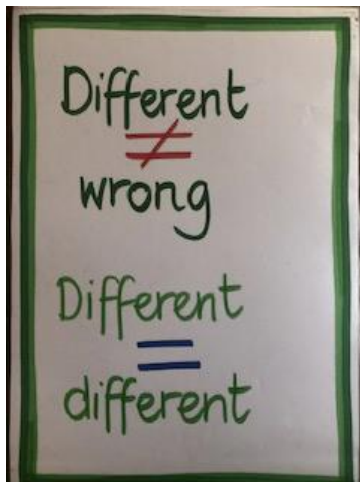
It is important to put aside a reasonable amount of time for this conversation. It is an opportunity for the Mentee to share their self-discovery and their 'so what's' in relationship to trust and how trust works or does not work in their life and situation.

What follows are some guidelines for hosting this conversation.

1. Confirm again the context for the exploration – in summary. What is going on and what is the outcome the Mentee is seeking.

2. Explain that you are there to work with them through the results of their reflection and to support them in creating some specific targeted actions designed to deal with whatever they are addressing.
3. You may start with the last chart first:
 - Begin with the final chart that shows the averages across each of the 6 elements. This provides an overview picture on one page. If it is relevant – reference can be made back to each detailed page (the various charts drawn by the Mentee) – or you can keep the conversation just focussed on the overview chart.
 - Showing the higher-level trust dispositions – the areas of strength and importance for the Mentee and the areas of opportunity which are either weaknesses or blind spots.
 - Have the Mentee explain how each element in turn shows up for themselves in general – starting with their strengths – those with the highest scores. Explore any differences if the Mentee is scoring for different contexts – and if there isn't consistency in behaviour, why might that be and what the impact of that is. (We will explore the emotional bank account later in this trust session)
 - For those that come easily and are strengths for the Mentee, invite them to consider how they react when in relationship with, or dealing with others for whom this element isn't strong. What judgments do they make?
 - Are there any unintended consequences of this strength? E.g. "Because reliability is important to me, I find it hard to say no to people and take on too much, this results in sometimes missing deadlines or working very long hours which has negative impact on my health due to high stress". If there are such situations it is important for the Mentee to also explore what options they may have to correct this situation and bring themselves more back into balance. These will form part of the ultimate action plan.
 - Repeat this process, looking at each element in turn, until you get to those elements which are not important or a concern for them. For these ones, it is important that they understand and acknowledge that others, for whom these elements are important will use them as benchmarks to judge how trustworthy the Mentee is. It works both ways - as we will judge others as trustworthy or not, against our own criteria, so others will judge us against theirs.

- For those elements where the Mentee is low overall – explore what is getting in the way for them to embrace these elements, what beliefs or mindsets need challenging? It is critical that the Mentee understand that building capability in ALL SIX elements is necessary to transform the quality of relationship across our lives. We realise the source of difference can also be the source of upsets and conflict in our lives.



The big idea that the Mentee needs to grasp is that there is difference, and that those who are different from them are not wrong, they are merely different.

As a result of this conversation the Mentee may wish to:

- Choose a particular individual relationship they commit to work on, by closing the gap in their trust profile
- Share their trust profile with others and host a conversation about differences in order to gain greater understanding and connection
- Select one particular element at a time and focus on closing the gap on just that one – this can become an on-going check in question for the Mentoring journey
- Work on any 'unintended consequences' of their strengths by working on counter balancing elements.

4. And then/or it may be helpful to look at each individual element, one at a time and in more detail.
5. If you have started with the summary chart (item 3) this may not even be needed as much of what is explored in that conversation may have naturally come up. But if that isn't the case, don't feel you have to look

at each element and all its factors in detail – this may lead to overwhelm. Options for consideration are:

- Take one element and deep dive into it, (We will provide some additional information for this later in this script) looking at all aspects, unpacking them and how they work in the life and context of the Mentee. And agreeing actions to take forward.
- Look at those items that have been circled as of concern in general to the Mentee. (see the example on the first page of the reflection pack) and ideally, particularly if there are a number of them, prioritise for action based on their importance in the Mentee's context.
- For a really thorough exercise, deep dive into each in detail – you may do this first BEFORE looking at the summary chart and then agreeing where attention should be placed and what actions are needed.

6. In preparation for these debrief sessions.

- It is important that as the Mentor you have gone through this process for yourself. This is because, with all the best will in the world – your own profile and pre-dispositions will potentially throw up your own judgments and resistance – even against the Mentee!!!
- That you are willing to share your own profile and insights if requested, or you feel it will assist Mentee's understanding.
- Have your own stories to share from your own work with the model to overcome 'overdone elements' and build muscle in areas that are not your preference.
- Be fully familiar with each of the elements and why they are important in the building of trust and trustworthiness.

7. Finally in this guide, some background information and ideas to help you understand and work through each of the elements. Let's therefore consider them one at a time.

Reliability

Very often Reliability is the most valued trust building element within an organisational context. And for people who have 'control' and the need to

‘control’ as part of their values set, this is usually dominant to the point of it being excessive. The issue of reliability at home and at work is often a fraught issue for people who are in high power careers. And where the priority lies. This can be presented as a challenge in itself by Mentees, how to balance commitments in the work environment and expectations of others in their private life.

If this issue comes up – it is helpful to refer to the work on the Emotional Bank account – a link for which is in the main session, and also offer to work with the Mentee on identifying their core personal values – which is a separate module that is included in Phase 2.

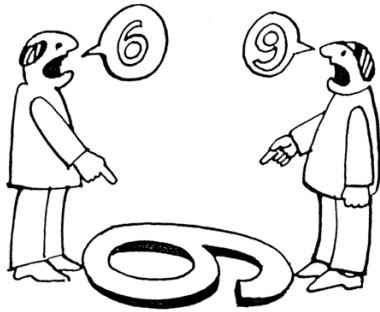
Acceptance

The issue of acceptance plays right into the realm of our beliefs and values and what is OK within our own frame and is or isn’t OK for others. This element can be particularly fraught as it uncovers often hidden assumptions and ‘rule books’ that guide who’s in and whose out. Particularly in these times of polarisation and open fights, and vitriol on social media platforms, we as Mentors may find ourselves in a circumstance where our Mentee has a very different frame of reference to our own – and that we are at risk of being triggered. There are also a number of deeper questions that can be explored here.

- Where in our lives are we more accepting – home or work and why is this?
- Is there a difference between our acceptance levels of different people we work with? Who and why? (this is particularly important if we are a leader)
- What about self-acceptance? What happens when we make mistakes – do we beat ourselves up? What is the impact of that, the downside?
- Does being accepting mean we are called to accept EVERYTHING? Just to take it all on – and what is the implication of that – if we unconditionally accept everything others do or say?

The challenge with acceptance is getting clear about what is ‘ours’ and what is ‘others. When it comes to a work situation – are we able to accept the person, even if their performance is not acceptable? Do we have the skill to agree to disagree, without causing offense or a fight? Can we shift into another’s shoes

and see through their eyes and their world view with empathy – even if it’s not for us?



It’s not about being expected to accept everything, but about building the capability to remain present and respond in a creative way.

Openness

Here we are interested in the discernment of disclosure and what needs to be present for us to open up fully. Noticing what we are willing to share and what not. We will be exploring the Johari Window in another module in Phase 2, and this provides some additional information that is useful when we are exploring the issue of openness.

Furthermore, if we think also about the work of Carl Jung, another consideration may be that whether we are an extrovert or an introvert impacts on our openness. This is particularly relevant when we consider the two different ways in which these two types recharge their energy. Those with introverted tendencies recharge themselves through taking alone time, and they can become very drained by being around people, particularly large crowds, for long periods. Extroverts on the other hand gain energy from the outside world through their interactions with others. Thus, the former may be experienced as quiet and withdrawn and the latter as open, and sociable. We summarise their general tendencies below:

| Introverts | Extroverts |
|------------------------------|---|
| May be experienced as closed | May be experienced as open – sometimes too open |
| Generates energy internally | Generates energy from external interactions |

| | |
|---|--|
| Can be withdrawn or shy | Can be forward and engaging |
| Have a private and a public self | Private and public self is usually the same |
| Intense, passionate and tend to bottle up emotions | Expansive, less impassioned, express emotions easily |
| Feel drained and overwhelmed by people | Feel buoyed up and energised by people |
| Have few close friends | Make and have lots of friends |
| Quiet in large groups. Fear of humiliation | Outspoken in groups. Take risks – no filters |
| Ability to concentrate for long periods | Easily distracted, like multi-tasking |
| Mentally rehearses before sharing | Think out loud |
| Need time to make decisions – weighing all factors | Quick impulsive decision making |
| Learn by observing and live life from making meaning and understanding things | Learn by doing, gain insight and make meaning as a result of their living life |
| Start with considering, move to doing and then back to considering | Start with doing then move to considering, back to doing |

When we are addressing the element of openness, we may explore with the Mentee where they may be too open or not open enough. And about what topics, or with whom – as it is often situational. The fear that restricts openness is often around a fear of being judged, rejected or not accepted.

In an organisational context, we run up against issues when there is a lack of openness – when we deal with feedback. People can ‘sugar coat’ feedback in order not hurt another’s feelings – yet paradoxically this results in the real message being lost, and the individual involved not knowing really where they stand. Honesty with empathy – enables those we provide feedback to, to be clear about where they are performing and where they are falling short, and it is only then that they are able to take appropriate steps to close any gaps.

As greater trust develops, there is a concurrent increase in willingness to share and be open. Particularly when we hold a mindset – that openness is a gift for our growth and development.

Congruence

Being congruent is about absolute integrity, walking your talk and no hidden agendas, no game playing. What you think, feel, say and do are all aligned.

We call this having ‘absolute congruent identities. Being who we truly are, moment-by-moment. Some questions we may be interested in exploring around Congruence are:

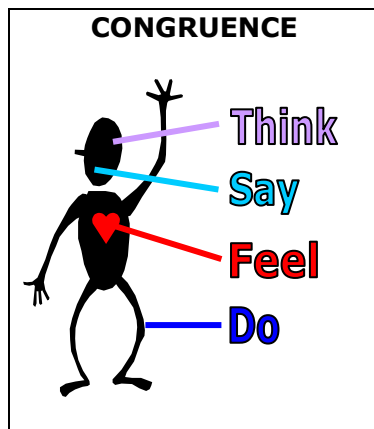
- If you had nothing to lose nor gain – would you be willing and able to drop your shields and fully share?
- Do you change your behaviour and depending on who we are with?
- How consistent are we in different contexts? (At work, at a party, at the game?)
- What would it take, to be always true to ourselves?

“There is no such thing as a minor lapse in integrity”

Tom Peters

In order to be congruent, we need to firstly understand what is important to ourselves. If this is an issue, as a Mentor you can invite the Mentee to spend time on working out their core values. The session for doing this is covered

later in Phase 2.



Self-Orientation and Selflessness

The extent to which we are self-oriented is based around our concern with ourself and our needs and wants, and those of recognising that others also have needs and wants that they are seeking to fulfil. We may think of this as

being the extent to which we are in our ego. Our Identity and how we see ourself in the world manifests the seat of our ego and how it expresses.

Ego, often has a bad rap. However having a healthy ego includes a sense of positive self-worth and self-love, both of which are important aspects of a balanced psyche. They are not destinations nor outcomes, but a practice, which is the foundation on which we build a happy life. Without self-love, we have nowhere to put the love or abundance that comes to us. Holding both self-worth and self-love means we are concerned about taking care of our mind, body and soul, and about living into our full potential – including our contribution to others. The healthy ego is forgiving of self and others, it is also accountable when actions or behaviours do damage to others. The healthy ego will admit mistakes and apologise.

When we are operating from a healthy ego, we are able also to embrace the powerful element of being a 'we' without losing ourselves. We can embrace selflessness. Which is rooted in the genuine desire for serving for the benefit of others, taking their needs and wants into account. It is not, however about subsuming ourself and being a doormat. It is a state of being able to hold the AND; myself AND other. Recognising what is mine, where the boundary is and what is the other.

When we explore self-orientation in this context of trust, what undermines trust in others and our own trustworthiness, is what we refer to as the unhealthy (even toxic) ego. This ego is like a shield, to our true nature, protecting us from the outside world, but also preventing us from loving ourselves, others and our lives. This aspect of ego, is the result of trauma or lack of full development in our early years – the first 7 years.

An unhealthy ego will tell you to stick to what's comfortable, to avoid uncertainty, and to have unrealistic expectations of yourself and others. Unhealthy ego is rooted in fear, anxiety, limiting beliefs, and toxic thinking patterns. The result is that we make our needs and wants fully our priority over the reality of others with whom we are interacting.

And, unfortunately instead of loving the self, so we can share that love with others – we look for love in the external. Parents, partners, children, pets – and if they don't get it right in our eyes we blame them. There is no accountability for actions taken, behaviours that hurt or undermine others – and in extreme cases there is no awareness. And in these circumstances those

who have high self-orientation that is unhealthy are often unable to acknowledge mistakes, apologise or when they feel slighted, forgive.

As a Mentor, discussing this aspect of trust can lead to sensitivities. The ability to discern for yourself between a healthy and unhealthy egoic dynamic is an important one. The question of a Mentee's Identity will appear during the journey and understanding this without judgment is critical.

Credibility

Credibility is very important in a work context, at the individual and organisational level.

The dictionary definition of *credibility* is the *power to inspire belief*. Thus when we consider this issue of trust, its a critical personal and professional trait. In their book "Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It" by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, the authors explore what it takes to be seen and experienced as credible. And why, in order for trust to exist, credibility is a critical aspect that others, particularly in an organisational context, that is looked for.

They've identified 6 dimensions that is useful to be aware of when exploring this element of Trust with your Mentee. The following quote, often attributed to Gandhi or Margaret Thatcher, is actually the thinking of Lao Tzu, and is particularly relevant when we consider the issue of credibility.

Watch your *thoughts*,
they become words.
Watch your *words*,
they become actions.
Watch your *actions*,
they become habits.
Watch your *habits*,
they become your character.
Watch your *character*,
it becomes your
D E S T I N Y.

The Six Dimensions Identified – which in fact feed directly into the purpose of a Mentoring Journey are :

- Discover yourself – Leadership is personal, do the people you lead or influence know what you stand for, what's important to you.
- Learn about those you lead – not just their favourite team, but their values, what is core to who they are in themselves.
- Look for common ground and affirm shared values, and use them in decision making and communication.
- Develop the capacity of others. Confirm confidence in other's abilities, there are inherent abilities, and those that can be developed – make sure real focus is placed on the latter
- Purpose – be clear about purpose. Why things are important, and how they serve not just today but also tomorrow
- Create Hope and Optimism. People want to be part of a positive future and to contribute to its creation.

So these 6 aspects were identified within the context of leadership. However, as we consider them we see that all of them rightfully and equally apply to the

whole of life. You will see that in the Golden Key Mentoring journey that there are a number of Modules that address these aspects.

