Trust: Knowing When to Give It, When to Withhold It, How to Earn It, and How to Fix It When It Gets Broken

In *Trust: Knowing When to Give It, When to Withhold It, How to Earn It, and How to Fix It When It Gets Broken*, best-selling author and leadership expert Henry Cloud not only adds one more tome to his prolific bookshelf, but more importantly, once again, delivers the goods. He sets the table in the opening pages with these words of context: If I had to summarize in just a few words what this book is about, I would say this: *Trust is the fuel for all of life. Nothing in life works without it—especially relationships. We are wired biologically, neurologically, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically to trust. Trust is the currency that drives everything. So we need to be good at it*. From there, he provides a comprehensive understanding of all that is required in a relationship established in trust.

Given the inarguable importance of trust in life and in leadership, I highly recommend this book. It will provide an essential construct in how you think about the non-negotiable place of trust. Check out these Book Notes to get a glimpse of the wisdom that awaits.

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Title: Trust: Knowing When to Give It, When to Withhold It, How to Earn It, and How to Fix It When It Gets Broken

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Book Description:
New York Times bestselling author, psychologist, and leadership expert Henry Cloud equips us to understand and manage trust for successful relationships through five foundational aspects.

Trust is the fuel for all of life. We are wired biologically, neurologically, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically to trust. Trust is the currency that drives every relationship, beginning with the foundational bond between infants and their mothers, extending to the trust networks that undergird every human endeavor—art, science, commerce—and binding together every relationship we have ever had or ever will have. Nothing in our world works without trust.

It is tempting to think that trust is simple, that we should be able to spot a lack of trustworthiness relatively easily. But we all have our stories about misplaced trust. We either missed clear or subtle warning signs or there just were not any warning signs to see. Everything looked good on the surface, and maybe it was. But we got burned anyway.

And sometimes we struggle to earn and keep the trust of those around us when trust bonds fail to form or are

broken. When trust breaks down, so does our ability to move forward.

Dr. Cloud explores the five foundational aspects of trust that must be present for any relationship to function successfully and helps us to understand how to implement them. He also guides us through the difficult process of repairing trust when it has been violated and broken, even when restoring trust feels impossible.

Rich with wisdom drawn from decades of experience in clinical practice, business consulting and research, Trust is the ultimate resource for managing this most complex and fundamental of human bonds, allowing us to experience more fruitful and rewarding relationships in every area of our lives.

Book Quotes:
I think “Just trust me” should come with sirens, flashing lights, and other warning signs. These words often fall short. They can disappoint, sometimes terribly. Neuroscience tells us there’s a good reason we should not “just trust” someone. I’ll explain this in greater detail in this book, but suffice it here to say that the entire human nervous system and brain are wired to scan our environment and quickly assess each person with whom we interact. We are designed to ask one crucial question before any other: Is it safe? When someone invites us to trust, we want to know before anything else if we will get hurt. And we’ll work hard to avoid pain. LOCATION: 71

In your personal life, everything rises and falls on trust. Trust yields intimacy. LOCATION: 80

If I had to summarize in just a few words what this book is about, I would say this: Trust is the fuel for all of life. Nothing in life works without it—especially relationships. We are wired biologically, neurologically, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically to trust. Trust is the currency that drives everything. So we need to be good at it. LOCATION: 113

Trust is a familiar word and a familiar concept. We know what it means and when it’s working for us. We also know, sometimes in agony, when it gets broken. Merriam-webster.com defines trust as a noun this way: “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.” This is a good and accurate explanation of trust, but I really like how the Cambridge Dictionary defines trust as a verb: “to believe that someone is good and honest and will not harm you, or that something is safe and reliable.” LOCATION: 182

We long to feel safe and secure, and trust is the currency that brings those feelings about in our lives. LOCATION: 187

While trust often begins with a feeling, it can’t only be based on a feeling, an emotion, or some kind of sense. It has to be rooted in more solid, observable, essential qualities. LOCATION: 204

When we trust, life works. When trust is high, it gets all the juices flowing and everything runs well. When trust is low—well, you know what that’s like. When trust is broken, things are even worse. LOCATION: 231

Humans are literally wired for trust, as trust is the fuel and currency that makes all of life work, from the very beginning until the very end. Placing our trust in other human beings makes every system develop. This happens emotionally, as a child grows and develops. It happens physically, as the emotional attachment that trust brings causes brains to develop normally, immune systems to function, body weights to hit normal levels, brain sizes to achieve milestones, and on and on. It takes place socially, as the child enlarges his or her circle of trust to include more than parents and family members and ultimately includes friends and peers. Trust begets more trust. LOCATION: 340

Trust is the most important tool we have in life, in every area. Nothing works without it. LOCATION: 347

Without going into a lot of complicated science, suffice it to say that everything we know and have learned in brain science reinforces the knowledge that humans are wired for connection. And connection is built on trust. We can basically say that to trust is human and that when we can't trust, we lose a lot of the human experience. Love, growth, faith, physical health, economic success, and more—these all run on trust. Without trust, things stagnate or even die. LOCATION: 362

Trust is the confidence that someone will guard what is important to you, what you need, possess, or desire. Whatever your interests are, someone you trust will safeguard the interests you entrust to them. LOCATION: 444

Trust is much easier to build, enter into, avoid, or repair if we know what to look for. LOCATION: 506

The five crucial issues that help us know whether to move forward or to pull away apply to every scenario I can think of, so let's recap them briefly here before diving deeply into them in the next section of this book.
1. You can trust someone when you feel your needs are understood, felt, and cared about.
2. You can trust someone when you feel their motive is for you, not just for themselves.
3. You can trust someone when you feel they have the ability or capacity to guard and deliver results for what you have entrusted to them.
4. You can trust someone who has the character or personal makeup needed for what you entrust them with.
5. You can trust someone who has a track record of performing in the ways you need them to perform.
LOCATION: 529-552

The process of trust begins by listening and by understanding other people—what they want and what they're feeling—in short, knowing what matters to them. The task is to know them instead of to persuade them. People must feel known in order to trust. Trust begins not with convincing someone to trust you; it starts with someone feeling that you know them. LOCATION: 585

When someone feels that you understand them, something magical happens. The brain begins to change, to move from its neutral or guarded state, or an "against you" state, to an open state. Their brain opens up to being open to you, and trust takes its first step. This is physical and chemical, as well as psychological and spiritual. LOCATION: 592

Trust begins not with convincing someone to trust you; it starts with someone feeling that you know them. LOCATION: 596

When we feel understood, that understanding calms down fear and resistance and we open up. LOCATION: 614

We can never act in ways that cause someone to trust us if we do not understand what they feel, think, need, desire, and fear. LOCATION: 662

When we fail to understand someone at a deep level, we unknowingly communicate that we are only interested in ourselves. LOCATION: 675

Great businesses are built on a deep, empathic relationship with customers. They understand their customers. They know them. And if they understand and know them, they can make them happy and taken care of. LOCATION: 740

Empathy comes from putting ourselves in someone else's situation and identifying with their experience. LOCATION: 764

Real trust is built not only through understanding but making sure the other party's motive is right, meaning that they are for your good. LOCATION: 881

Renowned marriage researcher John Gottman has something he calls the "index of betrayal." It is a metric for knowing when a marriage is in trouble, and it has to do with how much one partner looks out for the other. In his words, the marriage is in the trust betrayal zone when "people are no longer looking out for their partner's interests, or looking out for their own interests, but for their own instead of their partner's interest. Trust has not only suddenly evaporated but also been replaced by betrayal. One's ally and friend has turned into one's adversary." The concept here is that in a trusting relationship, we can depend on the other person to be caring and to look out for us, even when we are not there or not able to.
LOCATION: 909

Real trust transcends "moral codes," or "duty codes," in a powerful way: Love. Care. Compassion. We all grow up learning moral codes such as, "You should share with your sister or friend. That's the right thing to do." But, at some point, we all break a few rules. Rules are not powerful enough. But love is. The addict knows he should not drink so much, but he does. Yet, when he realizes the pain his drinking causes his ten-year-old, his love is a more powerful restrainer than the "rule" of staying sober. Meaningful moral codes depend upon the "law of love." The law of empathy, as we saw, makes us understand someone, and the intent to do them good instead of harm puts that into actionable trust. LOCATION: 930

The third essential of trust is ability, or capacity. This means a person can deliver what you are trusting him or her to deliver. It's being able to do what you need them to do. LOCATION: 1025

Without the demonstration of kindness, trust does not ensue. LOCATION: 1247

Honesty must be addressed first. I have seen more marriages ruined not by mistakes or betrayals, but by continuous lying about something they were not revealing. The mistake could have been forgiven, but the ongoing lies—the continual cover-up—killed the trust, not necessarily the affair or the "betrayal." Honesty is crucial and foundational. LOCATION: 1260

So, as we go forward in seeing that a lack of trust can come from more than the absence of basic character qualities, let's make sure that we know that a lack of honesty and morality cannot be tolerated or trusted, nor can it go unaddressed. It is essential; it's bedrock. If you can't believe a person, you have nothing to stand on. LOCATION: 1265

While this is not a book on character, personality, or emotional intelligence, it is a book on trust. My point here is that trust is a multidimensional construct, as we have said, and one of those dimensions is how a person is constructed—his or her character. What EQ and related research shows is that this dimension is as important as any other in terms of trusting someone in specific ways. It helps us understand how a person will perform their technical, professional, or other competencies in a particular context. It teaches us that no matter how gifted or smart or charming they are, we must know what they are like as people. We need to understand how they manage themselves, others, and tasks. EQ can lead to great trustworthiness, or disasters, pain, drama, and failure. LOCATION: 1301

We need to be able to trust that someone's makeup and character can deliver on what we have entrusted to them. LOCATION: 1308

The lesson is this: what someone has done before is usually the best indicator of what will happen next time…The best predictor of the future is the past. LOCATION: 1463

People grow and change, but the only way we know they can actually deliver on these things is for them to

prove it. We need objective reasons to have hope and trust. LOCATION: 1497

Trust is not simply given, it's earned. People must show us they are worthy of it, and that only happens through incremental performance over time. Time, not just performance, is a big factor here, and unfortunately, too many people are impatient. They base their trust on their impressions or judgments and not on objective data, which track record provides. LOCATION: 1552

"I'm sorry" is not enough for trust. It may be enough to open the door to a conversation about how trust can be restored, but it is not enough to automatically trust and move forward. LOCATION: 1628

An apology, confession, repentance—all are essential for "forgiveness." But they are not good reasons to trust someone in the future. Trust must be earned, as I've noted, by an incremental track record of being engaged in a process of change and a track record of incremental growth and success. They must show you that they have changed. LOCATION: 1629

We still have to choose to take the step to trust, and it always entails risk. LOCATION: 1757

Remember, trust is the key to life, and the way to have a full life is not only to find trustworthy people, but to be able to enter into relationships with them well. LOCATION: 1783

When psychologists speak of dealing with past issues that are unresolved, they are talking about fixing what has been broken and carried around unrepaired for years and making it so it can work again. Until the repair happens, people live out their trust issues in relationship after relationship, or situation after situation, repeating the patterns of not being able to trust and suffering the consequences. They inflict those consequences on other people as well. LOCATION: 1822

Trust is basically dependency. We depend on someone to come through for us on some promise or expectation. We make ourselves vulnerable with the expectation that they will provide something good for us and not hurt us in the process, either by not coming through or by injuring us in some way. LOCATION: 1854

Our greatest need, from the womb to the tomb, is to be known and understood. Good spouses, friends, business partners, and family "know" each other's needs and respond. In this way, our basic needs never change: we need understanding throughout life. LOCATION: 1910

But when one person gets the cue, or fear, that someone else is not understanding them, that's when suspicion and other forms of brokenness affect the trust muscle. This is why feeling understood is the foundation of all things "trust." LOCATION: 1912

The point I want to drive home here is this: when we find ourselves struggling to trust, the problem isn't always that the other person or entity is not trustworthy. Sometimes the issue is in the person who has to do the trusting, and they need to do some repair work. Their trust muscle, which was built in the past, perhaps even early in life, needs some healing so they can invest trust in trustworthy individuals. Trust is a two-way street. LOCATION: 2001

People who are comfortable with their imperfections are the ones who do well in trust. LOCATION: 2052

Trusting again, once trust has been broken, is more than a decision. It is a dilemma—a choice between equally unfavorable options. LOCATION: 2218

Instead, it is open-eyed, informed trust based on good, objective criteria. You need solid reasons to trust again. You will only trust because of certain factors that must be present before you extend trust again. LOCATION: 2260

In my experience, the question of restoring trust is about more than looking at whether this person is doing what they did before. The question is: “Is this person pursuing a path that will make them someone who will not do what they did before?” You need to know whether you are dealing with the same person—or a new one. LOCATION: 2263

Equipping yourself to make that determination is a process that unfolds as you follow the six-step model for repairing broken trust: Step 1: Heal from what happened to you. Step 2: Move beyond anger and revenge and turn toward forgiveness. Step 3: Ponder what you really want. Step 4: Figure out if reconciliation is available. Step 5: Assess trustworthiness. Step 6: Look for evidence of real change. LOCATION: 2266

The first step toward preparing and equipping yourself to repair broken trust in a relationship is all about you, not about the person who betrayed you. What must happen before anything else is healing—healing in your heart from whatever happened to break your trust in a person, a group, or an organization. It’s about reaching the point where you are ready—emotionally and cognitively—to think about trusting again. There’s no way for me to predict how long this healing will take or what all it will involve. Your situation is unique; your pain is individual. Your healing will take as long as it takes (and I encourage you not to try to rush it), and it will involve whatever is necessary to bring the relief, restoration, and wholeness your heart, mind, and soul need. LOCATION: 2284

When you are betrayed, you need time and healing. One of the main reasons you need these is that you can’t even think well when you are significantly wounded. You will make bad choices. LOCATION: 2321

Forgiveness feels so impossible at times, so unfair, and even wrong. But here is the best truth I can share with you about it: If you are going to be your best, healthiest, and highest performing self, you must forgive. LOCATION: 2359

Forgiveness is the way you free yourself from betrayal. Otherwise, you’ll be tied to it and trapped in it for the rest of your life. LOCATION: 2361

To hold on to an injury and to nurse anger and bitterness, is to allow a cancer to grow in your heart, mind, and soul. It will kill you, physically and otherwise. LOCATION: 2365

Here are some overwhelming facts from scientific research about how forgiveness affects us. Forgiveness: Improves mental health. Decreases rumination. Reduces or eliminates painful and damaging emotions, such as resentment, bitterness, hatred, hostility, residual toxic anger, revenge wishes and motivation. Reduces depression. Reduces anxiety. Aids in addiction recovery. Helps the PTSD healing process. Reduces chronic stress. Improves mortality rates. Lowers blood pressure. Lowers cholesterol. Resolves ongoing relationship struggles and chronic interpersonal disturbances. Increases immune system functioning. Decreases heart disease Increases agreeableness and lowers neuroticism. Breaks the link between chronic stress and poor mental health. Reduces pain. Increases the ability to judge people accurately. LOCATION: 2374

When you carry around unforgiveness, your mind, body, and soul produce toxic, fight or flight, cancerous emotions, chemistry, thoughts, and behaviors. And when you forgive, the mind-body relationship begins to clean out, clear up, and heal. LOCATION: 2382

Forgiveness is the way you free yourself from betrayal. LOCATION: 2385

Unforgiveness can turn you into a bitter, vengeful person. It causes you to lose aspects of your soul and life to the person who betrayed you. As long as you hold on to what wrong they did, they still own you. LOCATION: 2393

The verdict is in. If you are going to be healthy, you have to forgive. Period. LOCATION: 2403

One of my favorite verses is Ephesians 4:26: Be angry, but "in your anger do not sin" (NIV). God designed the human system to emotionally protest injustice. Allow yourself to feel and express anger, but don't do anything destructive in the process. LOCATION: 2429

Forgiveness has to do with the past. Trust has to do with the future. LOCATION: 2452

Forgiveness cleans out the past so you can evaluate what you want to do with the future. Just because you forgive someone does not mean you trust them. Forgiveness is free. It's something you grant a person for no reason having anything to do with them. You do it for your own good, so you can move beyond the pain of what they did to you. LOCATION: 2453

Trust, on the other hand, is not free at all. It must be earned and deserved. You do not have to trust people. If you do, it should only be because they have earned it, hopefully in the ways we will be looking at in later chapters of this book. But whether or not you go forward and have any kind of relationship with the person who hurt you, forgiveness is key to your future. And ultimately, if you want to repair the trust, it is absolutely essential. LOCATION: 2456

Just because you forgive someone does not mean you trust them. LOCATION: 2460

Reconciliation is returning a relationship to "good standing." It does not automatically include trusting the person going forward, although it may evolve to that. It is simply forgiveness on your part plus the other person apologizing and owning what they have done so you can return to a good, forgiven place, no matter what you decide to do in the future. LOCATION: 2582

You must go into protection mode with evil behavior. Someone is trying to harm you, and that is not the moment to attempt reconciliation on your own. LOCATION: 2739

Remember, it's not your fault that someone else did what they did. But it is always our responsibility to be our best, even in dealing with difficult people. LOCATION: 2780

After you've taken the first four steps in the process of repairing trust, it's time to take step 5 and determine whether the option of rebuilding trust with the person who betrayed you is viable. The way to do this is to use the five essentials of trust as a guide. These elements of trust are just as helpful in knowing if you can trust someone again as they are in determining whether you can trust someone in the first place. They are the same. Trustworthiness elements are the same moving forward as they are in the beginning. LOCATION: 2790

- Step 1: Heal from What Happened
- Step 2: Move Beyond Anger and Revenge and Turn Toward Forgiveness
- Step 3: Ponder What You Really Want
- Step 4: Figure Out If Reconciliation Is Available (Remember, reconciliation does not automatically mean trust will be restored. It simply means getting to forgiveness and being okay with the person who hurt you.)
- Step 5: Determine If Trust Is an Option LOCATION: 2845-2872

What I'm saying is: The two parties directly involved in the breakdown of trust usually cannot restore it by themselves. They need outside parties who show up and bring three ingredients to the repair process:

- 1. Outside support
- 2. Outside intelligence
- 3. A structured path LOCATION: 3033-3059

Trust repair does not happen on the fly, when it's convenient, or when people have extra time on their hands. There must be a structure to the process. Basically, to provide structure means to add a frame of how something is going to happen, who plays what role in the process, when and where things will take place, and what the activities will be. LOCATION: 3059

In collaboration with your outside help, begin to define each area in your relationship or partnership, using the five essentials of trust. As you answer the questions in each category, you'll define what is needed to build and sustain trust:

- Understanding
- Motive
- Ability
- Character
- Track Record. LOCATION: 3088-3121

Know this: no one can predict the future. There are no guarantees that the other person will always be trustworthy. The only one who can assure trustworthiness in the future is the one who broke the trust in the past. That's right, the person who broke your trust decides whether or not to earn your trust going forward. Their behavior will make the determination. All you need to do is to observe it, to watch it from the bleachers, so to speak. You do not have to be a fortune teller. You have to be an observer of their behavior. LOCATION: 3144

In this chapter, let's focus on eleven identifiable, objective criteria to watch for as you determine whether someone really meant it when they promised to change.

- 1. Admission of Need
- 2. Verifiable Involvement in a Proven Change Process
- 3. A Structured Approach
  A structure may include showing up for appointments, attending groups, receiving coaching, completing assignments, or other activities that aid the process of change.
- 4. Skilled Help
  Some structured programs may use a cookie-cutter approach that does not provide the particular expertise needed in a particular situation. It's good to know if the program and the personnel will provide the specific expertise and focus the person needs.
- 5. New Experience and Skills
  Some examples might be: listening, communication, conflict resolution, time management, sobriety, community building, team building, delegation, submission to authority, anxiety and stress management, life management, emotional regulation, mindfulness, assertiveness, empathy training, or others that

apply.

• 6. Self-Sustaining Motivation

• 7. The Presence of Support

• 8. Some Evidence of Change
Nothing gets better in a day. Change is a process, and it is going to take time. But you do want to see some movement, even if perfection is still a long way away.

• 9. Monitoring Systems
Often, someone is needed to oversee the process to make sure compliance is steady.

• 10. If Applicable, Total Transparency
For a future relationship to succeed, the person trying to change usually has to give up all secrecy and get totally transparent.

• 11. Willingness to Be Questioned
If someone is going to rebuild trust, they must be open and not offended when another person asks about something that doesn't look exactly right to them. LOCATION: 3148-3308

Misplaced trust happens in the heart, mind, and soul like infection happens in the body. LOCATION: 3376

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.