10 Simple Behaviors That Diminish Trust

Self-check: are you reducing trust without knowing it?

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Lying is the number one behavior that diminishes trust. It also tops the list of what people say when they think of trust betrayed. No surprise there. But we don't need to lie or deceive or manipulate to diminish trust. We can do it with simple, ordinary, everyday behaviors.

Most of us want to be perceived as trustworthy at work. We want to work in a trusting environment and operate with trust. And yet, we can easily sabotage our trust-building by trust-diminishing behaviors.

Diminishing Trust

Often blind to the impact of our own actions, or operating with impaired self-awareness, we can diminish trust without even knowing it. Since trust has become the new workplace currency, being aware of your actions and their impact is an essential success skill.

Below are **10 behaviors that diminish trust at work.** Are any of these part of your operating style? Take this **quick appraisal** to start your thinking.

1. You escalate the email chain, hitting reply all and cc'ing your boss and her boss. Adding the boss and the boss's boss and everyone in between screams distrust. A cover-your-you-know-what style ignites contagious distrust.

2. You bypass the person involved. Not happy with something someone did or didn't do, so you tell everyone but him? Or you complain to HR or management without informing the person involved there is even an issue. Not a trusting-building behavior.

3. You choose email, text message, or delegate the delivery of difficult messages. How you handle the difficult communications is, itself, a message. Hiding behind one-way communication, or relinquishing involvement is a trust-buster.

4. You tell half-truths, use spin, avoidance, and weasel words. Communications not grounded in integrity, forthrightness, and honesty impact trust. Deliberately opaque or evasive communications offers a different kind of transparency — one spotlighting intentions or character.

5. You over-promise and under-deliver. Some call it hype; others reference the saying "all hat, no cattle," but the yield is the same. If you don't take your own words seriously, why should anyone trust them?

6. You take credit without acknowledging others' contributions. You may think that you did it alone or you worked the hardest, did the most, or came up with the winning idea. But others influenced, helped, and supported you. Not recognizing that reduces trust, but knowing it and not acknowledging it, batters it.

7. You relinquish personal accountability. Blaming others. Not apologizing. Being a victim. Offering excuses. These are not trust enhancing behaviors. People who own their actions build trust; people who don't diminish it.

8. You operate as if others can't be trusted. Distrust is not the opposite of trust, control is. You

[build trust](#) by giving, not withholding, trust. What do your approaches, delegation style, systems, or procedures say about how you view others?

9. You visit the dark side of company [politics](#). Whether it's telling gotcha stories, igniting unhealthy conflict, or operating with a "win" versus "winning" [philosophy](#), those who serve their politics at work with other than good intentions reduce trust.

10. You lack self-awareness. When words are biting, emails and texts written as personal attacks, or work relationships viewed as easily changeable, trust diminishes. Those who lack self-awareness about how their actions are perceived by others risk operating without trust currency.

These are but a few of many trust-diminishing behaviors. You'll find more, along with those that demonstrate trust, in my new book, ***[The Titleless Leader](#)***.

The formula is simple. If you want to operate with trust and create a trusting work environment, pay attention to yourself. Start with your intentions, actions, commitments, and behaviors. Of course, that's common sense for any part of life.

We want *others* to be truthful, [operate in trustworthy ways](#), and demonstrate behavioral integrity but trust isn't just about "them." Want more trust at work? Eliminate *your* trust-diminishing behaviors.