

The Childhood Treasure of Trust

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Whenever I trust, I am hoping I am right to trust. Whenever I trust, I fear I should not be. It seems there is always good reason to trust and always some doubt about that good reason. Is that how it is for you?

Can I trust the kindness, consideration, or nurture that seem designed to meet my needs for them, or are these acts of kindness really self-serving for the giver? Am I being offered the illusion of love as a road-paver, a wheel-greaser, a way to prepare me to give? Am I really being asked to meet your need when you seem to be meeting mine?

Needs are the essence of the Treasure of Trust, because you develop Trust in the first year of life. As a completely dependent being, your infant self relied upon others to understand your needs and meet them. Your needs were simple ones: food, sleep, a little interaction, dry and warm clothes, comfort when you were distressed. You had a language all your own: cries and body language that spoke volumes.

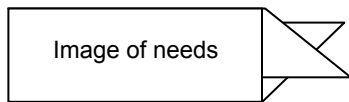
Maybe the adults around you learned to hear what each cry meant, what each facial expression and body posture meant, and they responded. But most of us had human parents, who sometimes followed bad advice, made mistakes, were depressed or distracted. We had parents who did the best they could, and maybe it was good enough. Maybe now we have a healthy and responsive Treasure of Trust that lets us depend on others to get our needs met.

And maybe we don't. If you can't easily ask for help, accept offers of help, or accept praise or compliments, your Treasure of Trust might need to be strengthened. If in your workplace you can't delegate, work cooperatively with a team, or ask for rewards that you deserve, your Trust needs work. If you are unable to form strong interpersonal bonds with others, or if you question others' motives in wanting relationships with you, your Trust needs remodeling.

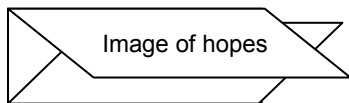
Fear is primitive; it rises from a pre-primate, pre-mammal part of our brains. We respond to fear with instinct: flight, fight, or freeze. Is hope the same? Is it the other side of fear's coin? Is it a puzzle piece that fits perfectly as fear's partner in an image of Trust?

When you need something, what is the form of your hopes and fears? To clearly see these *trust issues*, first you must clearly see what you need. Will you name those things? What do you need from the important people in your life? I need physical affection from some, and I need positive regard from all. I need honesty about my blind spots from some, compassion for my humanity from all. I need play and laughter from some, accountable action from all. What do you need?

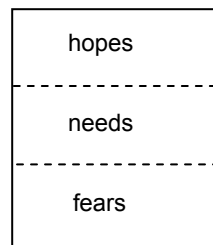
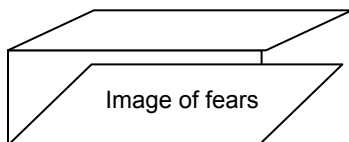
If you will, fold a piece of paper in thirds and turn it so that the center panel, the one with folds at both its edges, is facing you. On this third of the page, create an image of your relationship needs. My needs are a strand of bubbles on the surface of a still pond: messages from the depths. The water is green and brown, opaque rather than transparent, and the bubbles are like small windows into what lies below the surface. What is the image of your needs?



Leaving the paper folded, turn over this “brochure.” You will be looking at another panel (again, a third of the page), one that has a fold and an edge. On this panel, create an image that expresses your hope that your needs will be met. My hope is an iridescent bubble, taut and close to bursting. Its surface swirls with pale pink, purple, and blue rivers of love and dreams. They drip onto the fingertips of my reaching heart. What does your hope look like?



Now lift the panel that contains the image of your hopes, to reveal the third panel. It too has a fold and an edge. Here, create an image that expresses your fears that your needs will not be met. My fear is pointed, sharp, demanding, thrusting downward, seeking tender places. It is a darkened matte red, a red that maybe once was fresh blood but has dried and dulled. What are the shapes and colors of your fear?



Now open your paper to the full-size sheet again, and you will find that your needs, your hopes, and your fears are all parts of one picture. Together, they are an image of your Trust. As one picture, how do they look to you? How big are the needs, compared to the hopes, compared to the fears? When you fold your paper again, notice that your fears can be hidden by your hopes, or, if you fold the panels another way, your hopes can be hidden by your fears.

Regardless, your needs are there, touched by your hopes and fears; connected to them, but not buried by them. The hopes and fears will always be there, perhaps, and one or the other of them will be dominant at any moment. Trust asks only that you feel your needs and seek to have them met regardless.