



Rifka Schönfeld
STRATEGIES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

Trust Issues? How Trusting Others Can Change Your Business and Your Life.

Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter addresses a question on the topic of learning to trust yourself and others.

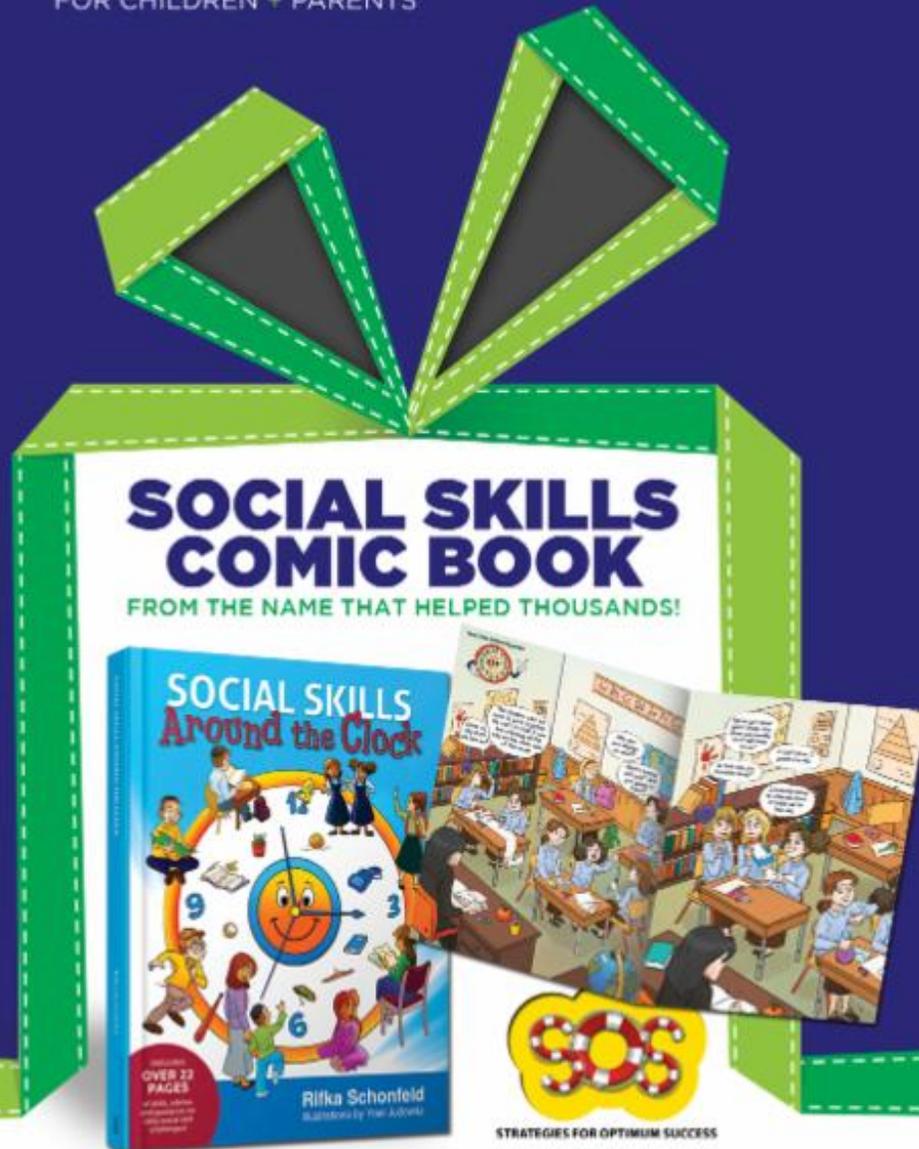
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QUESTION:

How can I learn to trust myself and to trust others?
Why is it so important?

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ANSWER:

There is one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, team, family, organization, nation, economy, and civilization throughout the world – one thing which, if removed, will destroy the most powerful government, the most successful business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, the deepest love.

On the other hand, if developed and leveraged, that one thing has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life. Yet, it is the least understood, most neglected, and most underestimated possibility of our time.

That one thing is trust.

-Stephen M.R. Covey

Bestselling author and leadership expert Stephen M.R. Covey, writes about trust in his recent book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. He argues that especially in our fast-paced and constantly changing world, trust is the one thing that builds both companies and relationships. In his book, he explains the four different core qualities that you need to have in order to create high trust relationships with others. I've outlined those qualities below:

Integrity. This seems like an easy one. In order to establish trust, you need to be honest. However, Covey breaks integrity down into three subcategories:

- **Congruency.** This entails practices what you preach. In other words, there is no gap between what you believe and what you do.
- **Humility.** Rather than not thinking so highly of yourself, humility in this instance indicates that you are looking out for the good of others rather than simply for your own good.
- **Courage.** The strength to do the right thing even when it is difficult.

Intent. Your intentions are heavily based on your value system, on who you are as a person. Covey additionally thinks about intent in three ways:

- **Motive.** If your motive to do something because it will benefit someone else, that is going to greatly increase other people's trust in you. If you do not want to benefit others, simply spell that out. Explain why you are doing what you are doing, rather than try to double talk around it.
- **Agenda.** Agenda is linked to motive. In order to gain trust, your agenda must be actively seeking what is good for others (and of course, still good for yourself).
- **Behavior.** Practice what you preach. Set your agenda, check your motives, and be transparent.

Capabilities. Capabilities are "the talents, skills, knowledge, capacities, and abilities that we have that enable us to perform with excellence." On the face of it, capabilities does not seem to fit in this list with integrity and intent. What do your knowledge or competence have to do with trust? Quite a lot, actually. In order for those around you to trust you, they need to believe that you are competent and capable. In particular, if you would like to be a leader, you need to show that you have those talents, skills, knowledge, capacities, and abilities to lead skillfully.

If you are worried that you do not have those skills, Covey suggests you go out and get them! The more capable you are, the more people will trust you and want to partner and follow you, both in business and relationships.

Results. Especially in the world of business, to which Covey's book is particularly geared, results are what people are looking for. They will trust you if you deliver results. According to the author, there are three types of results that we are judged by:

- **Past results.** What you have already proven you can do.
- **Current results.** What you are contributing right now.
- **Potential results.** What others anticipate you will contribute in the future.

The more results you can contribute, the more people will trust you and want to work with you and for you.

Above, I've outlined the four core qualities that you need in order to develop high trust relationships. Those qualities are developed with effort, over longer periods of time. So what can you do in your day-to-day interactions to develop more trust between you and those around you?

- **Tell it like it is.** Communicate with honesty (and tact!). Don't say one thing and mean another. People will not trust you if you aren't honest with them.

- **Be transparent.** If you make a mistake, let people know. Don't try to hide it or whitewash it.
- **Give credit.** If someone does something positive, let them and others know. Don't give them credit to their face and then take credit later when they are not around.
- **Treat others the way you would like to be treated.** Don't expect others to be comfortable with behavior that would make you upset.
- **Be clear about expectations.** Define your expectations for business (and relationships to a lesser extent) upfront. This way, there is no chance of a miscommunication later.
- **Listen.** Hearing what others have to say, and truly listening to them will allow you to build trust with each other.
- **Keep commitments.** If you say you are going to do something or be somewhere, do it or be there! Breaking commitments can truly damage the trust in a relationship or business.
- **Trust those who earn it.** When you feel that you trust someone, show them that you trust them by being vulnerable, give them the opportunity to demonstrate that the trust is mutual. That said, be careful that you do not extend your trust to those who have not earned it.

Covey's book had a lot of interesting points about the power of trust in the workplace and in relationships. Perhaps he has overplayed the importance of trust, but ultimately, he is right in arguing that it is the foundation of anything that involves more than one person. You can only improve yourself by improving your trust in yourself, in others, and other's trust in you.

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