



The Art of Developing Trust



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Getting to know you

I recently read two articles about developing trust on the [SmartBrief on Leadership](#) blog. They were “This Advice from 1751 Can Help You Be Better Liked Today” and “7 Ways to Build a ‘Circle of Truth’ as a Leader.” This reading coincided with a summit I recently attended where some young professionals commented on how easy it was to get to know me. This is more than a compliment. The ability to create new relationships is an important asset for a business person. **Getting to know someone involves establishing trust.** The blog posts mentioned above have some good ideas on how to do this. In this article, I share with you some of the important steps to take when developing trust in a professional relationship.

Care before credibility

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” This statement has been attributed to US President Theodore Roosevelt, motivational speaker [Zig Ziglar](#), best-selling author John C. Maxwell, and others. This quote emphasizes that **you must show genuine care and empathy toward others if you want them to value your knowledge and expertise.**

Trust begins with a question

Meeting someone new is often fraught with anxiety – there are so many unknowns. Generally both parties are anxious regardless of their backgrounds. To alleviate the tension, someone must take the lead in getting the conversation started. I suggest opening with a question. Let the person speak and stay out of the exchange. This gives your new contact time to relax. **If you**



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spearhead the dialogue for 20 minutes by listening, your newfound relationship will develop into trust.

Trust is a reverse psychological phenomenon — the more you get the other person to talk about themselves, the more they trust you. People are drawn to those with whom they feel comfortable. A warm smile and engaging interaction can be the start of a lifetime connection. **You will find that you can get anything out of life if you just help enough other people get what they want in life.** I attribute that thought to Zig Ziglar as well.

From theory to practice

An easy way to get a conversation started with a new acquaintance is to ask about their career. Inquire as to where they work, what they do, and how long they have been in their current role. **You will find that leading with questions and genuine interest opens many doors.**

The new friends I made at the summit are proof that this common-sense — but not common-practice — approach to establishing trust works. I've already sent them texts and added them to my contacts. **My goal in developing a trusting relationship with these new colleagues is to help them become all they can be.**

Listen up

Always approach a new relationship by demonstrating genuine care through active listening, thoughtful questions, and enthusiastic engagement. Showcasing what you know is not helpful in developing trust with others. Listen first is a timeless principle validated by everyone from Zig Ziglar to the young professionals with whom I recently connected. The counterintuitive secret to successful relationship building is that the more you get others talking about themselves, the more they trust you. **Influence is built not by speaking but by listening.**

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Getting to know someone involves establishing trust.
2. To build trust show genuine care and empathy toward others.
3. If you want people to value your knowledge and expertise, show them you care by listening.
4. When meeting someone new, lead with questions.
5. Influence is built not by speaking but by listening.