

The Theory of Trust as applied in the Trustbuilding Program

Compiled and edited by Rob Corcoran



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“Intuitively, we have an implicit understanding of trust, yet when trying to describe the concept, it becomes clear that trust is complex and elusive. Although it is widely recognized that a lack of trust propels groups toward conflict and prevents them from reaching a settlement, there is currently no shared understanding of what shapes trust in intergroup conflict. Further, even though scholars widely acknowledge trust’s multidimensional nature, there is no shared understanding on which dimensions exactly constitute trust.” (Mariska Kappmeier University of Hamburg Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, American Psychological Association, 2016).

This paper explores trust and trustbuilding as it is interpreted and practiced by Initiatives of Change, and more specifically, how the Trustbuilding Program defines it as a priority in efforts to build social cohesion and equity in communities where there is racial, ethnic, religious or class division. It draws on the experience of practitioners and on studies by a variety of scholars. The purpose of this work is to advance our understanding of trust in intergroup conflict by exploring its multidimensional components, as paths for fostering trust and reconciliation.

The social contract

Trust is a moral foundation for the functioning of democracy (see Eric M. Uslaner, *The Moral Foundations of Trust*, 2002). As Kate Monkhouse, a trainer and facilitator in the UK notes, “It is an essential part of the social contract between politicians, policy makers, communities and citizens. It is regulated through public communications, consultations (working groups, commissions, lobbies, etc.), the ballot box, and then when need be via regulators, the judiciary or ombudsmen as democratic processes are stretched or abused. Within this context, trust is both transactional (we citizens pay taxes, government keeps us safe and delivers services) and transformative (we work together, we build relationships). Of course, too much of the wrong sort of trust leads to corruption (he’s my uncle, he gets the contract, or just give me a bribe to sort it for you). We must aim to be worthy of trust, to be trustworthy, on all sides of these dealings.

“The consequences of the abuse of trust are significant in breaking the social contract, which is why we need to be honest in our engagement with communities. Trust within and between communities takes many years to build up and a short time to break (during scandal, media crisis, etc.). One analogy I would draw is that trust is like ligaments in the body, holding things together. When crises occur, it is fit to flex and respond - or snap if stretched. We end up with direct action or violent protest when patience runs out or trust has been abused. We can work towards multi-layered trust where there are quantitative processes for transparent dealings (e.g. written policies and budgets) and qualitative (listening, hospitality), both are needed, especially at this time.”

*A moral
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Initiatives of Change: “building trust across the world’s divides.”

IofC describes itself as a “world-wide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, who are committed to the transformation of society through changes in human motives and behavior, starting with their own.” It works to develop “ethical and trustworthy leaders at all levels.” It has a track record of a “sustained, multi-sector approach for reconciliation in support of efforts to overcome divisions, and to build social cohesion and equitable communities based on the transformation of individuals.”

***The Trustbuilding Program is rooted in
IofC’s principles and values***

The Trustbuilding Program is designed to build the capacity of community leaders to apply IofC’s principles and values to specific social contexts of racial, ethnic, class or religious division (and multiple other places where trust has been broken), and it offers a methodology for implementation. In summary: “Creating space for change in our communities is an art in which we are all learners. It requires skills of the head and the heart. By identifying and releasing personal ‘baggage’ – in the words of John Coleman – we can create a welcoming environment for others. Through inclusive dialogue we can hear each other’s stories and invite others to share our journey. In acknowledging painful history, we can move toward understanding, shared responsibility, and ultimately forgiveness and reconciliation. Through genuine partnerships and sustained teamwork, we can begin to build trust and to bring about change where it is most difficult and most needed.” (Corcoran, *Trustbuilding: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility*, 2010 and 2017).

Inner change and personal trustworthiness – the essential first step

Marc Gopin at George Mason University writes that destructive conflicts are based on primal emotions that cannot be solved by rational discussion and negotiation. “Indeed, what goes on *between* people cannot be separated from what goes on *within* people. Who we are, deep inside, will determine how well we get along with others, and so, if we want to fix our conflicts, or anyone else’s for that matter, we had better get started on ourselves....I have come to realize that the only path toward a lasting solution for destructive conflict lies in a process of self-examination and spiritual growth.” (Gopin, *Healing the Heart of Conflict*, 2004)

In discussing this approach to building trust, Patrick McNamara at the University of Nebraska Omaha says that there is an *intrapersonal dynamic* as well as an *interpersonal dynamic*. “You cannot build trust with others if you do not trust yourself. Trust begins with our own inner life. If you do not feel your life is aligned with your values and calling, it is very difficult to trust yourself. For me there are three tools: centering prayer individually and with a group; openness to God’s leading through regular times of quiet; and teamwork with colleagues who know me and can hold me accountable.” (Conversation with Corcoran, 2020.)

In IofC's theory of change, the process of trustbuilding begins as individuals develop the ability to know themselves and to take a fearless moral inventory. A disciplined regular practice of inner listening and obedience to the promptings of God, the Creator, or conscience; and the application of absolute values of honesty, purity, selflessness and love to private and public life is central to this approach to trustbuilding.

“Trust is a fragile bridge we build each day. Honesty about our failures. Purity in our motives. Unselfishness in our support of others. Love in our readiness to forgive and to accept forgiveness. These are the building blocks of trust. Trust depends on the authenticity of our lives, our openness, and our willingness to start with change in ourselves.”
Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*

The distinctive quality of the Quiet Time is that personal reflections can be filtered through the prism of moral values. This is what distinguishes it from mindfulness and many forms of meditation, valuable as those practices can be. It is a safeguard against the danger of believing that “I alone hear the truth” which has led to dictatorship, tyranny, and wars. It is both a personal resource and strategic tool: “connection, correction, and direction,” as Jean Brown describes it. These principles appear to resonate universally with people of all faith traditions and beliefs and form a common basis for building trusting relationships.

Louie Gardiner's expression of *IofC's “seed behaviors”* in 2012 was tested in several public forums and then discussed and adopted by IofC UK in 2015. A section on Safeguarding my own Trustworthiness states, “Safeguarding my own trustworthiness calls for proactive commitment to act with integrity and to equip myself to engage wisely, compassionately, safely and boldly in the service to that which calls me to action. Only I can safeguard my own trustworthiness. The question I ask is, ‘What shall I do, say and be each day for others to consider me trustworthy enough to stand alongside them?’”

When IofC talks about trust, it is generally referring to moral characteristics: I can trust this person to be honest. This person is walking the talk – the way they live matches their words. We trust people when they have the courage to admit where they're wrong. We trust people when they fulfill their

commitments. Qualities such as integrity, humility, vulnerability, compassion, empathy, and reliability tend to engender trust.

John Stuart Mill's essay “On Liberty” includes this well-known passage: *“The whole strength and value, then, of human judgment, depending on the one property, that it can be set right when it is wrong, reliance can be placed on it only when the means of setting it right are kept constantly at hand. In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by as much of it as was just, and expound to himself, and upon occasion to others, the fallacy of what was fallacious.”*

We should, of course, note the difference between trust in an individual's *integrity* and their trustworthiness in areas of *competence*. One might trust an individual's good character but not their technical ability. For example, an individual might be able to give good personal counsel but be totally incapable as a manager. Even at a technical level there are vast differences. A brilliant violinist could be trusted to give a memorable performance but would probably not be trustworthy as a brain surgeon.

As well as focusing on "inner change," IofC emphasizes listening to others and including everyone in honest conversation (dialogue), which moves from "an exchange of information to an experience of transformation" in individuals, in relationships and – if sustained – to change in society (see detailed case study by Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*). IofC has documented many years of experience in implementing various forms of dialogue and peace circles on all continents as a tool in the trustbuilding process.

Taking action together is a third step in IofC's trustbuilding process.

As McNamara notes, teamwork and mutual accountability are two of the characteristics of this approach. It is demonstrated in the conscious effort to work alongside – and to learn from – individuals of different temperaments and vastly different experience, people representing diverse racial, ethnic, religious and non-religious, political and economic backgrounds. This does not imply commonality of thought. It may be possible for Individual A to say to Individual B, "I often strongly disagree with you, but I trust you because I know that we share the same values and commitment and that you seek to follow the same inner source of wisdom." Unlikely allies come together around a shared vision and a shared journey.

"Trust is choosing to make something important to you vulnerable to the actions of someone else." Brené Brown, *The Anatomy of Trust*

Trustbuilding as an interactive process leading to sustained action

Melvin Dowdy, a clinical psychologist, educator and biomedical ethicist, writes: "Trust is formed primarily in relationship. The change theory must be a model for how relationships change. A premise of individual change as necessarily leading to relationship change will be too weak to carry the weight of genuine reconciliation.

"Trust is formed by action demonstrating trustworthiness. The most persuasive account of that action is what Habermas described as 'communicative action,' as a form of interactive conversation that allows competing views or diverse perspectives to be heard and respected equally. A trustworthy interaction is fundamentally a dialogue; it is not that you or I are trustworthy but that we are, our interactions are trustworthy. That means that any norm or rule of life, any change must 'do justice' to the interests of all parties.

"Which leads to the final element: the outcome of dialogue is not primarily understanding, though that may be a necessary part of the process, but it is not sufficient to sustain trust. To sustain trust there must be committed action among all parties. In dialogue work we learn what committed action looks like, we make promises to each other, and then we hold ourselves accountable to keep the promises we made.

“In summary, trust building is an interactive process of dialogue among diverse stakeholders seeking change that satisfies the interests of all parties and generates committed action that is sustained over time.”

Connecting inner change with change in society

IofC affirms the connection between inner change, relationship building, and change in society. The way we live does have impact on the world in material ways. There is a range of evidence indicating the validity of this belief. An obvious example is the radical changes that occurred in France and Germany after WW II, particularly in the coal, steel and textile industries. This is documented in meticulous detail by Edward Luttwak in Johnston and Sampson's *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. In *Bread, Bricks, and Belief: Communities in Charge of their Future*, (1994), Mary Lean claims that individual change is the often-overlooked factor in community development. She offers case studies of Indian farmers increasing crop production by overcoming rivalries, and taxi drivers in Brazil who formed an organization for honest drivers. In the USA, significant changes in the steel industry (see *John Riffe of the Steelworkers* by Grogan) and in the aircraft industry, which played a critical role in the war effort, have been well documented.

In all these cases, trust was built as individuals took an honest inventory of their own lives and saw evidence of others adopting new attitudes and behaving differently (see endnotes).

With a foundation of personal change, dialogue and teambuilding, IofC actively pursues conflict transformation, peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation in post-conflict situations as well as among deeply divided and polarized communities. These focal areas of inner change, honest and inclusive dialogue, healing of historical wounds and team/network building form the basis for the Trustbuilding Program's theory of trust and trustbuilding as a basis for social change.

Trust as economic lubricant

Trust works as social capital. According to Fukuyama in his book, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, trust can also act as an economic lubricant. He cites the example of the Haredi Jewish community in Antwerp which handles 80 percent of the world's diamonds. There are no written contracts, no collateral. Gems worth millions of dollars are passed around in small bags. The system works entirely on trust. Everyone knows that if an individual were to violate this trust he would be cast out from the community.

In *The Speed of Trust* (2006), Stephen Covey also makes an economic case for trust. Trust increases speed and thus lowers costs (e.g. we trust in FedEx to deliver the next day). He notes

Heart, mind and hand

“Discourse must be linked to changed hearts and minds that generate political will and action that culminate in substantive and transformative change.”

John Moeser, a professor of urban studies, architected a study of race and poverty in Richmond, Virginia, using Census data. His data was the basis for widespread dialogues facilitated by IofC's Hope in the Cities program which gave a platform for the mayor to launch the city's first anti-poverty commission, leading to the creation of the first Office of Community Wealth Building dedicated to reducing poverty.

that you must have trust in yourself. If you do not believe you will do what you say you will, how can you trust others to deliver? He identifies integrity, intent, capability and result as key factors. Societal trust is particularly important for business to cultivate, not just with employees or customers but with the community. During the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, close to 4000 buildings were burned. Five McDonalds restaurants were left untouched because they had a history of supporting their communities with basketballs for teenagers, free coffee for the homeless, literacy programs and jobs for the underprivileged.

Intent and impact

It is also possible to see how trust and mistrust play out in our intentions and in the consequences of our actions. For example, at an individual level, one might say or do something intended to be helpful, but which is heard or experienced by the other party as hurtful. Equally, in the public arena, policies may be designed and implemented with the best of intentions, but the impact may turn out to have unforeseen negative consequences on a group or community. In both cases, the injured party may experience loss of confidence in the trustworthiness of the other party. This is particularly true where there is a historical record of actions that have been damaging to one or more parties.

Individuals working to build trust must be aware of what they “bring into the room” by their presence and how they are perceived.

Individual and identity group trust, and unconscious bias

Regardless of the integrity and good intent of individuals, they will often be perceived by members of another identity group not just as individuals but as representatives of another group, based on experience, the historical record or

the prevailing narrative. Thus, a white male may be seen by minority groups as representing privilege and a history of domination, regardless of whether the individual believes that to be the case. Equally, a person of color (in the US context) may be seen by white individuals as having unfairly benefited from affirmative action or as representing negative experiences of street life that have been highlighted by the media. Thus, individuals working to build trust must be aware of what they “bring into the room” by their presence. This is particularly true where there is a record of unjust policies or harm experienced by one of more of the identity groups. Equally, awareness of the role of implicit or unconscious bias is an essential education process for potential trustbuilders (see Module 1 focus on privilege and diversity, and unconscious bias). These factors highlight the benefit of diverse facilitation teams where possible.

Some conditions for trust

In *L'entraide, l'autre loi de la jungle*, Pablo Servigne and Gauthier Chapelle, draw on research suggesting that mutual aid and cooperation are vital to the natural world. They write extensively on trust and the conditions for trust. In addition to scientific studies, they draw on the French communications specialist Frank Martin, author of *Le pouvoir des gentils*, who establishes a list of conditions for trust to “happen.” They present Martin’s approach as follows:

“Trust is built on experience. When we meet a group of strangers, we first remain careful, we keep our distances, we observe, we observe oneself. In order to get closer, we need signs of trustworthiness, of good will. Martin lists attitudes that allow authentic trusting relationships: show respect, good will, honesty, integrity, compassion, humility, openness, generosity, patience, gratitude, optimism, determination, humour, and mostly, authenticity. In addition, these two last conditions may be important: the ability to communicate well (speak, make oneself understood, inform others, etc.), and to define and to get everyone to respect a framework for safety (explicit ground rules that we give ourselves to create a container).”

Facts, feelings and the power of honest conversation

Even when we communicate our thoughts and information clearly to the other party, there is no assurance that what we say will be accepted or received as a basis for trust. Today we face a massive breakdown in trust that threatens our democratic systems and institutions. Much of this mistrust is based around racial, class, or religious or cultural identity issues which are politicized. “Facts” (including history) are framed to support the group narrative. Experts are mistrusted. Data does not convince people if it contradicts their chosen narrative which may be based on resentment, humiliation or insecurity about the future.

Information and intellectual understanding alone do not change people’s opinions. Indeed, evidence shows that individuals and groups may become even more polarized when presented with facts that contradict their political views or prejudices or which threaten their sense of identity (cognitive dissonance). Thus, groups may behave in ways that threaten their own best interests if there is a lack of trust in the source of the information. Therefore, it is helpful if the “messenger” is someone with whom the receiving group respects or can identify.

In *Whose Side is God On?* Peter Hannon reflects on his experiences of working with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Often the motive for dialogue is a desire to talk with the other person or group so that we can learn the other’s point of view and begin to build trust. This can be helpful where contact has been restricted. But once one knows the other person’s opinion, he asks, where do we go from here? Underlying the wish for dialogue is often

“Our brains are wired for stories. We may forget data, but we will remember stories.” Gail Christopher

the hope or the belief that if only the other side can hear what I have to say, they will see how reasonable I am. The trouble, however, appears to be that they say, “We know only too well what you think, and we are not

interested, thank you.” More information can end up making people even more antagonistic.

That is why one or two dialogues are rarely sufficient to bring even small amounts of attitude change, says Barry Hart of Eastern Mennonite University’s Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. “There must be a commitment from the outset to be in dialogue over a significant amount of time—months and years if need be. This enables people to experience each other in more constructive and relational oriented ways. The commitment also includes sharing what is discussed with those they represent during the interim periods between dialogues.”

Gail Christopher, whose vision and leadership resulted in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation funding a large part of IofC’s work in Richmond, as well as other cities, with its Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation focus, emphasizes the need to move from the head to the heart. She says, “Our brains are wired for stories. We may forget data, but we will remember stories.”

To build trust, a process of careful listening and respect for individual and group stories is necessary. Dr David Campt in *A White Ally Toolkit Workbook* (2018) highlights the role of storytelling rather than judgment as an important component of white intragroup dialogue with whites who do not believe that racism is a serious problem and who mistrust other whites who they suspect will portray them as the problem or try to “educate” them.

In “Becoming Unstuck with Relational Activism” (2020) Becca Dove and Tim Fisher advocate *storysharing* as distinct from *storytelling*. “Storysharing is reciprocal. We believe that if you want to connect with someone, you have to be open to sharing a part of yourself as well.” We also need to be aware of the danger of a single story – of self, or of a people or group – as stories are a dance between outside and inside, and can be largely made up of fictions, said Simon Keyes in “A distinctive relational process of thinking together about difference,” at IofC’s Tools for Change forum in Caux in 2020.

Initiatives of Change USA describes its model of dialogue (honest conversation) as moving from “*an exchange of information to an experience of transformation*” in individuals, in relationships and – if sustained – to change in society. “It moves us to action because it touches us at our deepest point of motivation. When we experience dialogue at this level, we respond and behave differently. We relate to other people differently and choose different priorities in our lives. Our friendships, our interests and our worldview are all deeply affected. In honest conversation, isolated people become connected and involved; the frustrated or disillusioned find hope; and the alienated see those on the opposite side in a new light. Insight, new relationships, and commitment to action: these are fruits of good dialogue. Such dialogues create space where people feel able to express their deepest emotions, listen carefully, and find the courage to shine a spotlight on their own responsibility for change instead of accusing others.” (Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*).

History and group narratives

Joseph Montville, the architect of Track II diplomacy, writes: “When one of more sides has suffered traumatic historical or current losses whose depth and tragedy have not been acknowledged or atoned for, wounds do not heal. Time does not heal wounds. Only healing, actively pursued, heals wounds. Consciously and unconsciously, these wounds are part of the historical identity of the losing side. Handed down from generation to generation. The memory of these wounds is a perpetual assault on the sense of self-worth and security of the people affected.

“According to Harvard psychiatrist, Gregory Rochlin, when an individual is the victim of physical or physiological attack, the automatic reaction is rage or reactive aggression in some form. Political psychologists also believe this happens with identity

Dignity

Marc Gopin writes that the deepest causes of conflict are feelings like dishonor and humiliation. Likewise, the deepest cause of healing involves the opposite: feeling honored, feeling valued, finding meaning in community.” This focus on honoring the dignity and value of every individual and seeking ways to extend our sense of community is at the heart of the IofC approach to trustbuilding.

Reframing the narrative

“Like water seeking its own level, the way memory is handled in society will always be an indicator of power relations.” Margaret Smith, *Reckoning with the Past: Teaching History in Northern Ireland*

groups and nations. It fuels strong ethnic consciousness and intense nationalism. It can only be dealt with if the wounds to self-esteem are healed. This is the burden of history. To start the healing process there needs to be a “walk through history” an inventory of hurts carried out together by winner and loser or their descendants, to rediscover what happened in the past which keeps alive so much anger and resentment in the present.

“One such walk through history was the Hope in the Cities walk in Richmond in 1993. Walk is the operative word. It does not suggest an exchange of accusations and vigorous defenses. Any group can do that, and they often do. What began was an honest conversation about the past where courageous men and women squarely face their symbolic or genuine responsibilities for past injustices to victimized people.

“Such a walk establishes an agenda for healing. It reveals the record of past hurts and allows the conscience of large numbers of people to be activated in the most positive sense. Ideally, this walk produces an acknowledgement of wrongs, a critical first step in liberating the victims from their fears and resentments.” (Greisdorf, Corcoran, *Connecting Communities*, 2001).

In 2016, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation convened working groups on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation, to develop recommendations for community action. These groups, comprised of more than 150 prominent racial healing practitioners, racial equity advocates and national and local partner organizations, focused on narrative change, separation, law, economy and racial healing. The working group on racial healing and relationship building called for “strategies that enable people to listen and to be open to hearing about other people’s stories, history, triumphs and pain.”

These strategies, which reflect significant input from the Hope in the Cities model, include “authentic and intentional” conversations that build on interconnected values: “safe and sacred spaces to take off our masks and rituals that acknowledge every person’s humanity and invoke the presence of the divine.”

The practitioners emphasize that healing is not a linear process. “It is a journey we undertake together. And what is required is a commitment to that journey even as we continue to heal ourselves and our communities....Healing happens in relationships. This process will move us to the moral center in terms of our hearts and our relationships with one another.”

Trust in conflict resolution and peacebuilding

Drawing on several sources, Joshua Ballew, like other contributors to this paper, highlights the fact that trust is relational (Harden, 2004), and points out that social conflict is also relational. In cases of intergroup conflict, trustbuilding is imperative, but building trust in such a context, especially when there has been traumatic loss, has been described as a Sisyphean task (Montville, 2006). Sisyphus being the tragic Greek mythological figure who was condemned to continually roll a large boulder up a hill, only for it to roll back down before it could reach the top. In the case of trustbuilding, the task is more akin to moving many stones up a mountain, where the stones correspond to the complexity of the conflict.

The theory behind this stone metaphor is the view of trust as a three-part relation where A trusts B to do X (Baier, 1986; Luhmann, 1980). An example of this three-part relation would be that I may trust someone at a coffee shop to watch over my belongings while I use the restroom, but I would not trust this same person to hold a notebook with all my computer passwords. Even when the two people, A and B, remain the same, trust may exist or not exist depending on the context of X. Trust is therefore said to be multidimensional, because there are many Xs in each relationship.

Seeking to find the basic dimensions of trust—that is, which Xs are essential for one group to trust another—Kappmeier (2016; 2019) has produced an Intergroup Trust Mode with five dimensions: competence, integrity, compassion, compatibility, and security. These five dimensions apply to how one group views the other. For example, it is hard to trust someone who can't do or even won't do what they say they will do—meaning my view of their competence and integrity is low. However, even if I consider other group able to do what they say they will do, without a belief that the other group has a concern for my group's wellbeing, trust will still be hard to build. In an extreme situation of low security, knowing that another group will do what they say they will do is little comfort if their expressed intention is to harm my group. These dimensions of trust are the crucial stones that must be moved up the mountain in order for trust to be built.

Ballew emphasizes the potential for this model to be used as an evaluation tool to measure trust as the aggregate of these dimensions and to identify which dimensions require focused trustbuilding efforts. This model can also be used as a monitoring tool because knowing which stones are making it up the mountain and which are being left behind will allow for important adjustments in any trustbuilding effort. The attention to trust must certainly be placed on the relationship between groups in conflict, but Ballew also emphasizes another front for trustbuilding efforts to focus: intra-group relations.

Any trustbuilding efforts between groups must also consider the need to continually build trust within groups.

The reality of trustbuilding work in the context of large-group conflicts is that interventions occur among only portions of each group. Even the most well-attended workshops and all-inclusive dialogues can only reach a segment of the population. As trust is built between the participants of trustbuilding efforts and the relationship between certain members of A and certain members of B is transformed, there is a risk of reduction in trust in intra-group relations. For example, one might find it hard to trust someone who trusts the enemy. Therefore, trustbuilding between groups can lead to less trust between members of the same group. Kelman (1979) notes this contradiction when he describes the difficulty in transferring change from problem-solving workshops to the conflict contexts of participants. Therefore, Ballew surmises, any trustbuilding efforts between groups must also consider the need to continually build trust within groups.

Ballew concludes by returning to the stone metaphor. Once we identify which stones must be taken up the mountain, and check that both the mountain of the other and the mountain of one's own group are being climbed, then those stones that reach the top can begin to be assembled into a bridge of trust between groups.

Dignity and Trust in negotiations

A sense of “trustworthiness” is essential for a negotiation to be transformative, writes Barry Hart in *Dignity in Negotiation: Its Transforming Power* (2015). “As negotiators recognize their own value and worth, they begin to open to the possibility of the same in others. It is this *dignity nexus* of value and worth in members of the negotiating parties that provides a sense of common humanity and purpose and allows for the possibility of meaningful and workable agreements to emerge. Not that this is an easy process or even possible in all cases, but when a bridge between parties is built on the premise of one's own and the other's worthiness and value, there is a greater potential for transformational thinking and acting to take place.

“As Gardner (2012) notes in his understanding of building healthy communities, it is less about structures, and more about ‘building relationships.’ In the same way, transformative negotiation is less concerned with building structures or developing highly detailed negotiation frameworks, and more about building relationships of trust (Aquilar & Galluccio, 2008). The underlying belief is that the sustainability of the process toward a constructive end is built on the premise of honoring the efficacy and power of these relationships.

“Trustworthiness through trust-building mechanisms such as listening and showing respect for others is rooted in a set of values and practices that require humility, patience and a sense of a ‘shared responsibility for a new future’ (Corcoran); or at minimum a shared responsibility to engage in a process toward that future. In this way negotiators move from trying to persuade others or coerce them, using brinkmanship methods of change, to *using* interdependency as the value and mechanism of change.” (See also Hart's “Trustbuilding Wheel,” p 17).

Mapping resources for trustbuilding, sustainable teams and social change

A vital component of the trustbuilding theory for effective social change is the building of diverse and sustainable multi-sector teams, partnerships and networks. This builds on all the key components of trustbuilding discussed in this paper. Therefore, along with internal relationship building, it should be a primary focus for a strategic planning process. A good starting point is mapping the strengths, skills, interests, contacts and affiliations present within the team (see page 56). This mapping can then extend to creating strategies to build relationships and partnerships with other individuals and organizations, and to build networks of trust that are not necessarily tied to a project or time limited.

This strategy proved to be the most significant factor in the effectiveness of the Richmond trustbuilding process. It included:

- Working with a university scholar who could provide key data on racial equity
- Collaborating with museums and libraries in telling history more fully and honestly

- Seeking other nonprofits with similar values who IofC could support and who could support IofC in various ways (meeting space, publicity, shared staff time for specific events)
- Foundations and corporations who wanted to increase health and equity in the community and who saw IofC as a valuable capacity building resource for community leaders and were willing to provide funding.
- The outreach to the Richmond newspaper as a potential ally instead of continuing to regard it as a problem in the community because of its history of racism
- Willingness to be a “silent partner” at times and give support give support without demand for recognition

The table below shows one way of mapping potential resources.

VALUABLE PERSPECTIVES/RESOURCES	WHO HAS THEM? (Some examples from Richmond)
Available resources within the group?	Make an inventory of team skills and contacts
Accessing key data on racial equity	Work with universities
Telling history more fully and honestly	Collaborate with museums, libraries, etc.
In-kind support: who could we support and who could support us in various ways (meeting space, publicity, shared staff time for specific events)?	Seek other nonprofits with similar values
Organizations seeking to increase health, equity and social cohesion in the community and who see IofC as a resource in certain areas and who are willing to provide funding	Foundations, businesses, and other funders
Turning problems/obstacles (individuals or institutions) into allies	Media
The willingness to be a “silent partner” at times	

Conclusion: factors for effective program planning

Trust is built and positive change in a given context occurs as individuals accept responsibility to examine their lives (motives, priorities, relationships, values and actions) in light of how they would like to see the larger community, and are willing to take steps to re-align their lives accordingly.

The core principles for an ongoing process of personal and social change are articulated in the Trustbuilding Program: Personal transformation, honest conversation with all stakeholders, healing of personal and community wounds, and strategic, sustained action for justice and social cohesion. This process is not linear. Attention must be constantly given to all four steps.

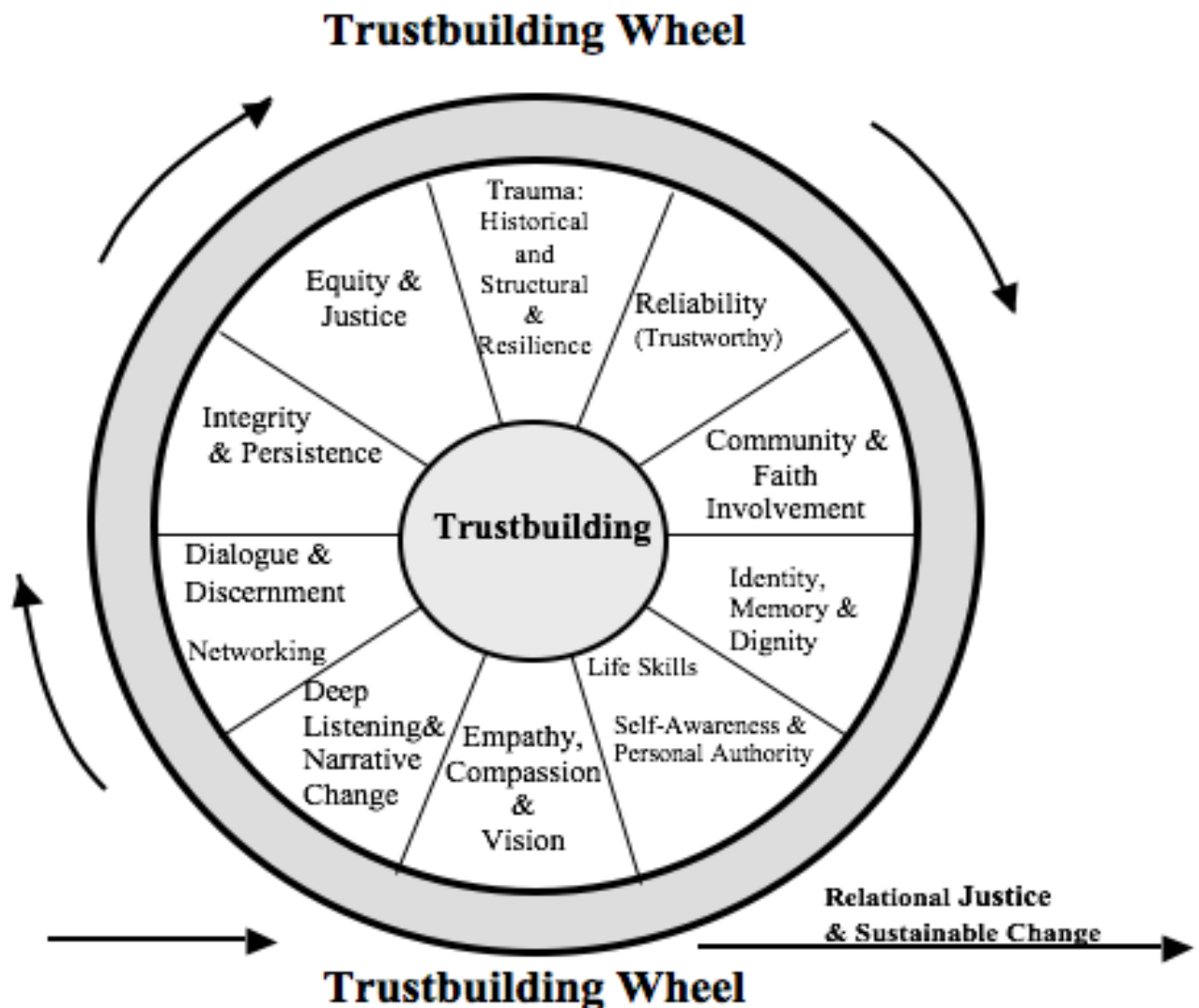


In designing training programs to support trustbuilding efforts, experience indicates that certain ingredients are most likely to result in an effective outcome (see Manual, 6 – 7). These include: A diverse cohort representing multiple sectors of the community; a diverse faculty team; input by respected authorities to provide key data; a focus on the local/regional historical context; a mix of didactic, experiential and interactive activities, and informal small group and one-on-one conversation; a conducive “container” or space where participants feel comfortable; adequate time for personal reflection; and several opportunities for the cohort to come together over the course of several weeks or months, recognizing that the process of trustbuilding takes time and that there are many skills and insights to learn and absorb.

Endnotes

Rob Corcoran writes: One of the people my father met in his early experience with MRA (now IofC) in the 1930s was an industrialist who had moved into a smaller house to avoid laying off any of his workforce during the Great Depression. My dad, a shipyard worker who had grown up amid class war, said, “I can trust these people.” As a result, he and several of his colleagues devoted their lives to bringing new perspectives to the international labor movement.

Kim Beazley, the former minister of education in Australia, became the country’s most trusted politician. After his encounter with MRA as a young rising political star, he wrote an honest letter to his wife about events he had concealed from her. The letter made her feel, “I could trust my husband forever.” He apologized to political colleagues. He said, “In politics you can lie by distortion, and I have done that. You can also lie by concentrating only on your opponents’ mistakes and never on their virtues. That was my particular problem.” He began to approach issues based on “It’s not who is right but what is right.” He wrote, “For me, honesty meant that I would not play the political game of making cases, suppressing everything inconvenient to my position and playing up everything convenient. This game has many dangers, not least that I found I was convincing myself of the strength of arguments I didn’t really believe.”



To build trust or in many cases to re-establish trust, a whole-person and community approach is required. The Trustbuilding Wheel represents this intersection of values, vision, skills and discipline that are necessary to bring about relational justice and sustainable change. Beginning this process requires that the barriers of mistrust, which are usually driven by historical harm, identity manipulation and the dishonoring of dignity, need to be overcome so that meaningful relationships are (re)established and just and equitable systems are put in place that support these relationships.

The values that inflate the "tire" of the Trustbuilding Wheel are: Kindness, Selflessness, Love, Honesty, Integrity, Purity of Intention, with Imagination and Creativity as 'drivers' of these values.

Barry Hart 2020

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- Hannon, Peter, *Whose Side is God On? An Enquirer in Northern Ireland*, Peter Hannon, printed by University Press Belfast, Ltd. 1995
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- Lean, Garth, *On the Tail of a Comet, The Life of Frank Buchman, a Small Town American Who Changed the World*, Helmers & Howard, 1988
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- Shriver, Donald, *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember its Misdeeds*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005
- Smith, Margaret, *Reckoning with the Past: Teaching history in Northern Ireland*, Lexington Books, 2005
- Thurman, Howard, *Deep is the Hunger*, Friends United Press, 1978
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation, "Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation," Design Team Recommendations, December 2016

Other resources

- Corcoran, Rob, "Building trust in the heart of community," *National Civic Review*, Jossey-Bass, Fall 2017
- Elliott-Greisdorf, Karen, "Healing the Heart of America," Cornerstone Productions, 1993,
Part 1 <https://youtu.be/4QJZRjPnwOI>
Part 2 <https://youtu.be/QkAtVFllGnA>

Elliott-Greisendorf, "Making Richmond Home," <https://youtu.be/SwtKhWKrnA>

Hicks, Donna, "The role of ethics, values and dignity in building trust", 2013

<https://youtu.be/fY8L2zJIVYU>

Hicks, "Building Trust Through Meaningful Work," 2018

<https://youtu.be/ZZsKzoyuMRc>

Elworthy, Scilia, "Deepening Feminine Wisdom,"

<https://www.scillaelworthy.com/deepening-feminine-wisdom/>

Corcoran, Rob; Freeman, Matthew; Walden, Ebony, "Dialogue in the context of Black Lives Matter," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rr0JW2gazX8> July, 2020

Many practitioners and academics have contributed to the development of the Trustbuilding Program theory of trustbuilding and curriculum. Many others have been advisors or guest faculty for the Richmond CTF program and/or have spoken at IofC conferences. They include: Abigail Lash Ballew, macro social worker; Joshua Ballew, conflict resolution practitioner, facilitator and mediator; Sushobha Barve, Center for Dialogue and Reconciliation; Chris Breitenberg, Rising Tide Capital, trainer and facilitator; Benjamin Campbell, founder Richmond Hill; David Campt, trainer and facilitator; Paige Chargois, pastor, speaker and teacher; Jacqui Daukes, trainer, facilitator and mediator; Geneviève Dick, university professor and Trustbuilding program manager, Quebec; Melvin Dowdy, clinical psychologist, educator and biomedical ethicist; Bonnie Dowdy, Coming to the Table, trainer and facilitator; Marc Gopin, ICAR, George Mason University; Matthew Freeman, trainer and facilitator; Barry Hart, Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University; Patrick McNamara, University of Nebraska at Omaha, trainer and facilitator; Kate Monkhouse, Creators of Peace, trainer and facilitator; John Moeser, Emeritus Prof. University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University; Joseph Montville, Director, Program on Healing Historical Memory at School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University; Hugh O'Doherty, Kennedy School of Leadership, Harvard; Krish Raval, Director, Faith in Leadership; Lisa Schirch, NA Research Director Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, Senior Policy Advisor Alliance for Peacebuilding, Research Professor EMU; Donald Shriver, President Emeritus Union Theological Seminary, NY.; Margaret Smith, American University; Sylvester "Tee" Turner, pastor, trainer and facilitator; Carolyn "Cricket" White, trainer and facilitator.