

# Trust Builders and Trust Breakers

Jon Gordon and Amy P. Kelly

*Trust is like a tree. It takes a while to grow  
but can be chopped down in a moment.*

**I**n our new *Power of a Positive Team Training*, Amy P. Kelly created a “Trust Builders and Trust Breakers” exercise where participants share their best ways to build trust and common ways that trust is broken.

It’s a powerful, popular and essential exercise because trust is the currency of leadership, teamwork and success. If people don’t trust you, they are not going to follow you. If they don’t trust you, they won’t do business with you.

As a leader you want to make sure that you are integrating trust builders into your life and leadership while avoiding the trust breakers. As a team it’s essential to know what builds and breaks trust so that you can become a more united, connected and committed team. And if you are in sales, trust is everything because no matter what you are selling, people are usually buying because of the relationship they have with you and trust they have in you.

At the top of my list of trust breakers is when someone doesn’t follow through on what they said they were going to do. When someone doesn’t keep their word, trust is broken.

On the other hand, when people keep their word trust is built. When someone keeps their word over and over again, they become someone who you see as trustworthy.

That's why my number one trust builder is integrity. The word integrity evolved from the Latin root *integer* which means whole or complete. It's further defined as an undivided or unbroken completeness. When you live with integrity you are whole and complete. There is no separation between what you say and what you do. The essence of who you are is revealed by your commitment, character and choices. Through your actions people see there is an *integration* (also from the word integer) between what you do and who you are.

This article wouldn't be complete without making it clear that living with integrity doesn't mean we don't ever make mistakes. Everyone does. No one is perfect. But it does mean that when things don't go as planned, we take ownership and are transparent and honest while sharing how we will rectify it. Then we do.

This is another great way to build trust and is definitely at the top of the list of trust builders!

