

TRUST BUILDS TRUST

Natacha Joubert, PhD¹

It's crazy how difficult we find it to focus on what we want. We want love, trust, health, joy, unity and peace for everyone. But we devote almost all our attention and energy to what we don't want: our fears, illnesses, suffering, hardships and disagreements. What's wrong with this picture?

A culture of mistrust

We spend a huge amount of time, energy and expertise counting, diagnosing, analyzing and discussing the countless illnesses, conflicts, injustices, miseries and problems of all sorts to which we fall victim. We only have to watch the news or current affairs programs to realize how significant a role this plays in our lives and the degree to which we are experts on the subject. Day after day, there are numerous references to the new threat, misfortune or tragedy that is upon us. And the future is not at all reassuring, since we anticipate more epidemics, crises and catastrophes of an even greater magnitude, while the resources to deal with them are steadily dwindling. Even the experts seem to be increasingly discouraged and overwhelmed.

And that's not all. The enemy is now everywhere. We can no longer trust anyone, not even people in authority. At any moment, we risk being taken advantage of by unscrupulous individuals, even our own parents and friends.

Is it at all possible to protect ourselves or escape from these dangers? If we believe what we are told, not really. We are all at risk. We are all condemned to experience one, or likely more, of these evils one day or another. It's only a matter of time.

To all of these threats and this suffering inflicted upon us by the world and by others, we need to add our also countless fears, doubts, limitations, defects and faults, from which stem our painful feelings of inferiority, insufficiency, dissatisfaction, inadequacy, alienation, isolation and powerlessness. However, we must continue to tirelessly fight against these hardships that afflict us time and time again. Life is an endless battle. We have to keep fighting until we die.

Are you starting to feel a bit sick to your stomach yet? Do you feel weariness, but also a kind of resistance coming from within? That's a good sign! You're reacting and telling yourself that it makes no sense. And you're right. It's all quite crazy. We have made

¹ Doctor in psychology, practitioner and researcher, Promotion of mental health and well-being; dr.natachajoubert@gmail.com; 819.930.3445

mistrust and judgement of ourselves, others and the world the focus of our lives and our entire culture.

Fortunately, we're also capable of great moments of confidence. For example, many of us felt and shared in the solidarity and joy surrounding the rescue of the Chilean miners. The attraction of an event like that is so great that it calls out to us, touches us, brings us together and lifts us up, so much so that for an instant we forget our own misery and suffering. We share a single heart and rejoice together. Even though the situations that trigger confidence and unity on such a great scale seem to occur less frequently than those that afflict and divide us, they nevertheless reveal an important part of who we really are. Let's examine this a bit more closely.

Choosing trust

As a rule, confidence in yourself and others is defined as an attitude or feeling that develops on the basis of our experiences with people and things. Children who grow up in an environment filled with love and security will learn to trust themselves and those around them. However, it is important to note that the development of trust does not depend solely on external factors. For instance, trust is possible even for people who have gone through hard times or had unhealthy relationships in childhood and later in life.

There comes a moment in our lives when we understand that, fundamentally or in its most conscious expression, trust is first and foremost a choice or decision that we make, and not simply the result of our interactions with people and events. We must choose trust to experience trust, both in ourselves and in others. The great confidence that was inspired by the rescue of the Chilean miners demonstrates that confidence is in each and every one of us and is ready to shine through if we give it the chance. Confidence comes to us spontaneously when we are momentarily able to forget or overcome fear and mistrust. As well, we have all had experiences where a person or situation appealed to the better part of our natures. That is where our confidence lies. That is our true nature, our real identity.

Practising trust

Choosing trust in a world dominated by mistrust means choosing to move in a different direction, and sometimes even swimming against the current, and that requires willpower, determination and vigilance. It's a choice that must be renewed and acted upon every day because the tendency to resort to judgement and victimization is strong and ever-present.

Here are a few suggestions to help you succeed. First, it's important that we become aware of the judgements that we make regarding ourselves and others. We make these judgements constantly, on a daily basis, sometimes without even realizing it. They are

not always big judgements. It doesn't matter. They all harm us, bring us down and, above all, leave no room for trust.

Whether we are judging ourselves or others, our judgements are always based on our own interpretation of things. And we always interpret on the basis of our perception of ourselves or, more exactly, of the value that we place on ourselves. Generally speaking, we have something of a tendency to be hard on ourselves and see all of our faults. So it's not surprising that we are so tough in our judgements of others or that we perceive their judgements of us as attacks. Every time we judge another, we are judging ourselves. And every time that the judgements of others reach and hurt us, we believe that they are true!

In addition, we must decide to stop making so many judgements and give ourselves the means or tools needed to reach this goal. For example, stick a Post-it note reminding you of your decision on a corner of your mirror, day-planner or computer screen. I myself use Post-its all the time! Also, our family, friends, neighbours and coworkers are our best guides in this process, since it is easier to notice the judgements that we make about them than the ones that we make about ourselves. But remember, all judgements—those that we project onto others to protect ourselves and those that we perceive as attacks on us—are nothing but the reflection of the judgements that we make about ourselves (see chart). We are first and foremost our own victims. It is therefore important to be attentive to our thoughts, comments and actions with regard to both ourselves and others. We can have one of two things: either they make us feel good and lift us up or they harm us and keep us down.

Above all, don't judge yourself for having made judgements! When you notice at the time or after the fact that you are *still* judging or feeling judged, renew your decision to choose trust and confidence in your own value and to let go of judgement. With time, patience and gentleness, we can really succeed in decreasing how much we pass judgement and, in so doing, allow our true nature to increasingly come to the fore and greatly improve our own situation and that of those around us.

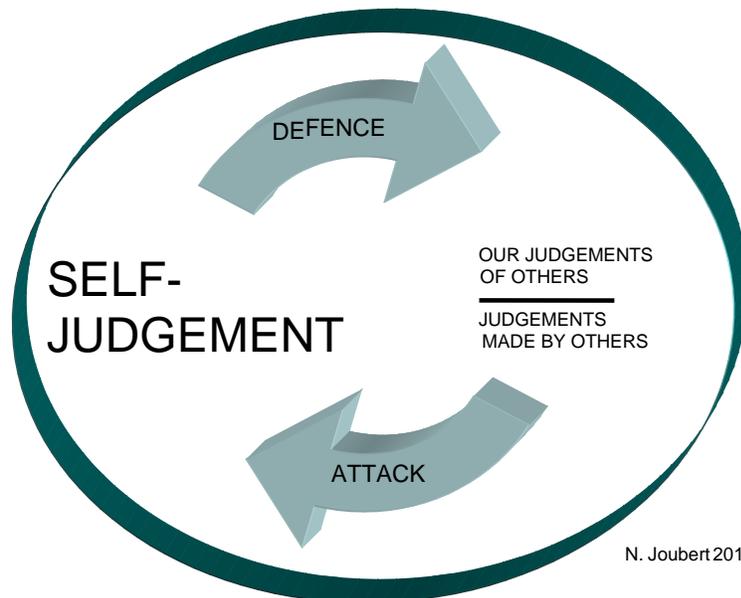
Conclusion

Trust grows a little bit stronger every time that we favour it in our relationships with ourselves, with others and with the world. Even though it is a choice that only we can make, we are not the only ones to do so. A growing number of people, here and around the world, want nothing more to do with fear, mistrust and judgement. They are choosing confidence, love, openness, joy, tolerance, patience, unity and peace. All human beings, without exception, are vessels for trust. The manifestations of trust can vary, but they all spring from the same universal principle: love, both of ourselves and of others.

Choosing trust over mistrust means fully assuming responsibility. It's recognizing that we are the main source of judgements of ourselves and others and of the ensuing mistrust. It's also recognizing and taking back the power to rid ourselves of judgements and eventually stop being the victim of ourselves, others and events.

The less we judge ourselves and others, the more our confidence in our true value and our true identity will be able to emerge and grow. The change is one that starts within us. The more space we give to trust, the more it is present in our relationships with ourselves and others and in our lives. Our entire perception of the world and reality is transformed. And our entire being can show, with strength and certainty, that trust builds trust!

CYCLE OF JUDGEMENT AND VICTIMIZATION



All judgements—those that we project onto others to defend ourselves and those that we perceive as attacks by others on us—are fundamentally judgements that we first make about ourselves.