



FLPPN

The most effective method of building trust requires interaction that carries the acronym FLPP...

- Frequent
- Low-risk
- Personal
- Positive
- Neutral

Let's say you are struggling with a teenage son and he is becoming more isolated from you by the day. Consider the five steps to developing trust and determine which step you need to work on.

How often do you interact with your son? Do you talk with him daily? Is your interaction low risk? Having a low risk interaction does not include questioning your son about the drugs you just found under his mattress. There is a time and a place for all things. If there is no trust in your relationship, inserting high anxiety will drive him further away.

Is your interaction personal? One mother, in an effort to follow these steps, took her knitting into the computer room and sat near her boy as he played video games. As she discussed her strategy, she was questioned how personal she was with her boy. "Do you talk with him," she was asked? She recognized there was nothing

personal about their interaction. What would you recommend to the mother?

If you suggested she start playing video games, you're getting it. Hank R. Smith tells the story of playing Candy Land with his little girl. "I hate Candy Land," he says. "When she's suppose to move one space, she moves two. I can never win. But I play Candy Land now so I can talk about her boyfriends when she's 16."

His girl typically wins, she has a positive experience, it's personal, low risk, and his interactions are frequent. This is living FLPPN in his relationship with his daughter.

A typical communication Blind Spot most of us fall prey to is offering opinions without being asked. When having frequent, low-risk interactions, be sure to keep the conversation about your child and not about your opinion or perceptions. Avoid judging their silly behaviors or ideas with self-serving comments. Statements such as "I know exactly what you mean" or "If I were you," reduce trust because they are judging and sometimes condescending.

Trust is built one interaction at a time. The heat of a conversation goes up without trust. In a low trust relationship, you lack stability, but in a high trust relationship, the speed of progress travels at the speed of light. In fact, trust is a currency and you can produce it abundantly with the right skills.

At work, you may lack trust with certain co-workers or perhaps certain managers. The typical approach is the ostrich pose. You walk around the outside of the company office just to avoid contact. You don't trust the space you share with that person. Many times the primary reason is we don't want confrontation, whereas sometimes we simply don't have time or the energy to handle a high maintenance person today.

This is where learning the skill of FLPPN can greatly enhance productivity along the path to developing a higher level of trust. When you communicate with your manager, as an example, at what level is your conversation? Many of us develop mile long relationships with people that are a half-inch deep. There is no stability in such relationships.

When you see your manager, learn something new about her. If you run into a co-worker, discover something new about him. Instead we comment about the weather, the local sports teams, the economy, or something you don't want to discuss and you use sarcasm, criticism, or rhetorical questions to avoid having them comment.

Our greeting is modeled after this behavior. What does it mean when someone sees you in the morning and says: "*Hey, how ya doin'?*" Let's say you were in the ER the night before. Do they really want you to elaborate on your gall stone experience? So we have learned the common American response of "*fine, how you doin'?*"

How deep is that relationship? These are frequent and low risk, but not personal or positive. Neutral maybe, but positive? When you learn this skill, you can develop a deep understanding one 2-minute discussion at a time. It takes practice, but the return on investment is worth the time.

Remember, it's not about you, your opinions, or your brilliance, but rather, it's about your interest in them.

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