

Rebuilding a Broken Trust

One of the hardest things to do in your marriage after lies, broken promises or infidelity invade your relationship is to rebuild your trust. When I was single, I used to wonder why you would want to rebuild trust if it had been so completely disrupted - but marriage is a complex relationship. You can love someone like crazy and get hurt because of something they did and struggle with all your might to repair and rebuild your relationship because loving someone means loving all of them - flaws included.

No, it isn't easy. Repairing your relationship may be one of the most difficult undertakings you ever do. Trust is important though, it is a vital ingredient to a relationship and you need your trust to keep your relationship healthy and growing.

I am not going to make light of this - I can offer some suggestions to help rebuild your trust. I can offer tips and some guidelines. I can even share some of my own experiences, because trust is something I find very hard to digest even in the best of times - rebuilding it seems as hard as climbing K2. You can train to climb mountains though and while progress may be slow and it may be arduous - there comes a moment you achieve the summit and you stand and look out over the world - and you realize that you've done it. You've made it.

Isn't that worth every hard won inch you climb?

Tips to Begin Rebuilding Trust:

- Let go of the past. When you obsess over each insult, each act, each thing done wrong - you are not giving yourself time to heal from it. You need to heal in order to begin to trust again
- Forgiveness is not easy - you can decide to forgive someone and you can make it happen - it's a conscious choice that we make and it's not some magical insight that floats down on a glittering shower of gold - it's a conscious choice
- Ask your spouse to demonstrate that the behavior has changed; keep no secrets - demonstrate your own trustworthiness in the same manner
- Set goals - talk to your spouse and set the goals together - they don't have to be huge - they can be daily goals - but the sheer act of working together can foster positive feelings between you
- The injured spouse must be allowed to share their pain. Their spouse must acknowledge that they caused the hurt
- Listen - don't just listen with the injury you are feeling - hear the words with your heart and your head
- Renew your commitments to each other - it can be as simple as saying "I know this is going to be hard and I know that we're going to have trouble - but I'm here. I want to be in this marriage. I want to be with you."
- Take responsibility for your own actions; when we're hurt we want to lash out - acknowledge that and pull back - when you say something that hurts your spouse - even in reaction, you can apologize for it
- Don't be afraid to seek out counseling with a trusted advisor whether it's a marriage counselor, a pastor, a religious advisor or a wise friend - avoid involving other family members because it can exacerbate the situation