



1	CHAPTER 34
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Positive Organizational Scholarship and Trust in Leaders

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Abstract

In this chapter, we discuss how courage, authenticity, and humility, all key characteristics of positive organizational scholarship (POS) leaders, enable leaders to be more likely to engage in trusting behavior with others. Moreover, our research has found that a leader demonstrates his or her trustworthiness by demonstrating reliability, openness, competence, and compassion. These trustworthiness dimensions contribute to a leader’s ability to create and sustain hope, thus creating a circle of trusted others that includes colleagues and subordinates whom he or she can rely on and who in turn relies on him or her. Through this trusting behavior, the leader empowers others and provides hope for the future, leading to lasting positive changes for the organization and creating a culture of trust.

Keywords: Positive organizational scholarship, trust, leadership, hope, authenticity, humility, courage

17 Current global economic conditions cry out for a
18 new way for individuals to lead organizations and
19 societies. Trust in a variety of institutions, including
20 governmental and business, is at an all-time low. To
21 strengthen society and its major foundations, we
22 need to build and rebuild trust. Several of our major
23 societal institutions have experienced major declines
24 in how much the public trusts them. The Edelman
25 Global Trust Barometer has been tracking trust
26 levels in society since 1999 and includes both U.S.
27 and international assessments. This year, Edelman
28 found trust in business at its lowest level ever, 38%,
29 down from 58% the year before (Edelman, 2009).
30 This assessment is lower than when the Enron deba-
31 cle occurred. The Gallup Poll of Trust in Government
32 found that 81% of those polled trust the govern-
33 ment to do what is right only some of the time or
34 never, the worst percentage since the survey began
35 in 1993 (Gallup, 2009).

36 Not only do we distrust those institutions
37 that we depend on for our livelihoods and security,
38 but we have little trust in leaders as well. A Survey
39 by the Centre for Work-Life Policy, an American

40 consultancy, found that between June 2007 and
41 December 2008, the proportion of employees who
42 professed loyalty to their employers slumped from
43 95% to 39%; the number voicing trust in them fell
44 from 79% to 22% (The Economist, 2009). In 2009,
45 the National Leadership Index found 69% of
46 Americans believed that there is a leadership crisis in
47 the country today—not much of an improvement
48 from 81% in 2008 and 77% in 2007 (Harvard
49 Kennedy School, 2009). These and other findings
50 suggest that a leadership crisis exists in the United
51 States just when strong leadership is most needed to
52 address not only the current economic crisis, but
53 also many longstanding economic and societal chal-
54 lenges as well.

55 Trust has declined for many reasons, and some of
56 these have persisted for decades. These include soci-
57 etal issues, such as increasing suspicion due in part to
58 decreased interaction among individuals, as discussed
59 by Putnam (2000), and institutional factors, such as
60 the recent massive failures in our financial system; sig-
61 nificantly deficient federal disaster response, especially
62 to Hurricane Katrina; and rampant partisanship by



1 our elected leaders. They also include organizational
 2 malfeasance and misfeasance, as exemplified by the
 3 Lockheed bribery scandals in the 1970s, the Red
 4 Cross HIV-testing failures in the 1980s, Long Term
 5 Capital Management in the 1990s, and Enron and
 6 Tyco International in the 2000s. Finally, they include
 7 violations of trust by many business, governmental,
 8 and religious leaders, acting individually or in concert
 9 with others.

10 In this chapter, our focus will be on how leaders
 11 build trust between leaders and their followers in a
 12 positive organizational context. We will begin by
 13 introducing the role that trust plays in the role of a
 14 leader, including how trust has been proven to pro-
 15 duce positive outcomes for leaders. Next, we will
 16 focus on the link between trust and positive organi-
 17 zational scholarship (POS), examining the links
 18 that exist between them. Then, we will delve more
 19 deeply into those positive characteristics that con-
 20 tribute to a leader’s willingness to build trust and his
 21 ability to demonstrate trustworthiness, focusing
 22 especially on courage, authenticity, and humility.
 23 Next, we focus specifically on the four key four
 24 dimensions of trustworthiness that a leader can
 25 demonstrate to others to engender their trust, pro-
 26 vide them with hope, and foster their empower-
 27 ment. Finally, we reveal how a leader builds a culture
 28 of trust to create lasting, positive change in an orga-
 29 nization (see Figure 34.1).

30 **The Role of Trust in Leadership**

31 Trust is important because it allows individuals and
 32 collectives to manage interdependence more easily

33 by reducing the need for contracts and formal agree-
 34 ments. Trust reduces uncertainty and helps us to
 35 manage complexity (Luhmann, 1979, 1988). It also
 36 permits highly flexible work arrangements that pro-
 37 mote risk-taking and innovation (Mishra, Mishra,
 38 & Spreitzer, 2009). Indeed, when trust has been
 39 established, entirely new ways of behaving are possi-
 40 ble (Fukuyama, 1995). Based on almost two
 41 decades of research involving thousands of employ-
 42 ees, managers, and top executives, we define inter-
 43 personal trust as one party’s willingness to be
 44 vulnerable to another party, based on the belief that
 45 the latter party is *Reliable, Open, Competent, and*
 46 *Compassionate* (Mishra, 1996; Mishra & Mishra,
 47 1994). We call these four beliefs or dimensions of
 48 trustworthiness the *ROCC of Trust* (Mishra &
 49 Mishra, 2008). Our definition of trust is consistent
 50 with several decades of research on trust, which
 51 incorporates the key elements of vulnerability
 52 (Deutsch, 1962; Granovetter, 1985; Zand, 1972),
 53 risk/risk-taking (Deutsch, 1973; Lewis & Weigert,
 54 1985), and rational choice (Kramer, 1999). It also
 55 encompasses definitions that other leading trust
 56 scholars have articulated, including positive expecta-
 57 tions regarding others’ intentions or behavior
 58 (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998), and in
 59 particular, their competence, integrity, and benevo-
 60 lence (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995).

61 Previous research has shown that leaders are critical
 62 to building trust in organizations, and that trust
 63 in leadership is significantly related to a number of
 64 attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes. In
 65 their meta-analysis of 106 independent samples,

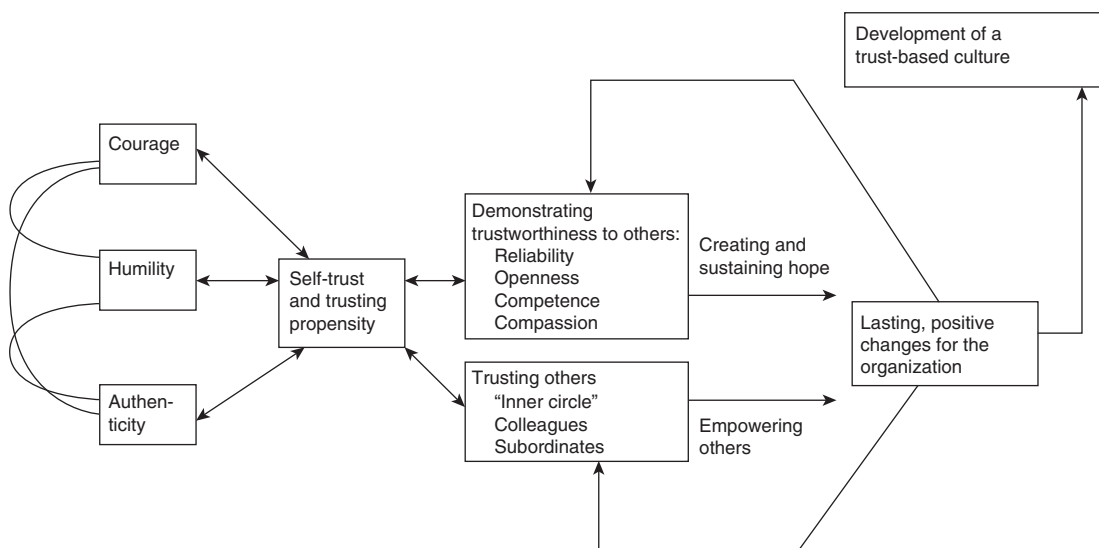


Fig. 34.1 Model of trust-based positive organizational scholarship.

1 Dirks and Ferrin (2002, p. 618) found that trust in
 2 leadership was positively related to a variety of out-
 3 comes, including job performance, organizational
 4 citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment,
 5 and job satisfaction, while being negatively related
 6 to intention to quit. They also found that proce-
 7 dural justice, distributive justice, and interactional
 8 justice were positively related to antecedents of trust
 9 in leadership, as were participative decision making
 10 and perceived organizational support (Dirks &
 11 Ferry, 2002, p. 619). In the section below, we review
 12 specific empirical studies that illustrate how trust in
 13 leadership and elements of POS have been found to
 14 be significantly related.

15 **Trust and Positive Organizational**
 16 **Scholarship**

17 Many of the assumptions and propositions underly-
 18 ing POS in our assessment generally depend on
 19 relationships based on trust between individuals.
 20 Positive organizational scholarship environments
 21 are typified by positive attributes, such as belief in
 22 the goodness of human contribution and human
 23 potential leading to positive performance (Cameron,
 24 2007). Positive organizational scholarship research
 25 also advocates the belief that humans desire to make
 26 a positive contribution to the life and health of their
 27 organizations, and one key feature of positive orga-
 28 nizations is trust (Cameron, 2007). However, just as
 29 the focus historically has been on negative organiza-
 30 tional characteristics, there has also been a lack of
 31 emphasis on understanding how trustworthy lead-
 32 ers in organizations can contribute to positive orga-
 33 nizational outcomes.

34 Spreitzer (2006) notes several key elements of
 35 POS that would be typical within trust-based rela-
 36 tionships. Developmental efforts to emphasize the
 37 importance of leveraging strengths rather than
 38 focusing on performance gaps (Spreitzer, 2006) are
 39 more likely to take place if individuals trust one
 40 another based upon beliefs about each other's
 41 benevolence. Jolts that are viewed as positive and
 42 thus a stimulus for learning (Spreitzer, 2006) are
 43 more likely to be viewed as such when organiza-
 44 tional members trust one another in terms of being
 45 competent, so that they can develop constructive
 46 solutions to the jolt, and/or they trust one another
 47 not to engage in punitive actions for any mistakes
 48 that occur in the process of responding to the jolt.
 49 Also, individuals who desire to create mutual sup-
 50 port through the building of durable resources
 51 (Spreitzer, 2006) also are more likely to do so if they
 52 trust one another. Moreover, we believe that the

developmental processes and outcomes articulated 53
 within POS to date are likely to be enhanced by 54
 relationships based on trust between followers and 55
 their leader. 56

Previous Research on Trust 57

In his review of the research literature on trust in 58
 organizations, Kramer (1999, p. 571) identified 59
 cognitive/rational, affective, and social components, 60
 and argues that rationality is an insufficient basis for 61
 understanding why individuals choose to trust 62
 others (Kramer, 1999, p. 573). Despite a number of 63
 scholars arguing for trust as comprising affective 64
 components (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Bromiley & 65
 Cummings, 1996), and finding empirical support 66
 for distinguishing affective from cognitive compo- 67
 nents (e.g., McAllister, 1995), affect has received 68
 relatively less attention in research on interper- 69
 sonal trust. In the context of POS, with its empha- 70
 sis on positive relationships, however, we would 71
 expect that affect would play an important role in 72
 individuals' decisions to trust. 73

More generally, Kramer (1999, p. 574) argued 74
 that context should also be considered in under- 75
 standing whether, how, and why individuals choose 76
 to trust. Hardin (1993) argues that trust involves 77
 the dispositional nature of the truster, characteris- 78
 tics of the trustee, and the context in which the 79
 decision to trust takes place. Building on Hardin 80
 (1993), Kramer (1999, p. 574) argues that cog- 81
 nitive, calculative considerations would matter more 82
 in organizational contexts in which little is known 83
 about one another, "e.g., transactions involving 84
 comparative strangers," and relational consider- 85
 ations might be more important in contexts in 86
 which much information is known, "such as those 87
 involving members of one's own group." Relational 88
 considerations are central in trust research that uti- 89
 lizes a social exchange perspective (e.g., Konovsky 90
 & Pugh, 1994; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & 91
 Werner, 1998). In POS contexts, we would argue 92
 that relational considerations would matter greatly 93
 in decisions to trust. Not only would organizational 94
 members have greater knowledge of one another, 95
 but individuals also would be evaluating each other 96
 on the extent to which they adhere to the values and 97
 beliefs comprised by the positive organization. 98

The importance of context in shaping expecta- 99
 tions and trust is supported by empirical research. 100
 Miller (1992, p. 197) found that Hewlett-Packard's 101
 policy of removing locks on doors and eliminating 102
 time clocks demonstrated management's trust in its 103
 employees' cooperativeness. This allowed employees 104

1 to assume that their fellow colleagues would be
 2 cooperative, and thus made it more likely that they
 3 would want to trust each other. Uzzi (1997) also
 4 found evidence that contexts that assumed coopera-
 5 tion among organizational members made it easier
 6 for them to trust one another and help one another
 7 solve problems. When organizational contexts dem-
 8 onstrate that individuals are not to be trusted, con-
 9 trasting behaviors can result. Hochschild (1983)
 10 found that flight attendants “came to fear and dis-
 11 trust their passengers because of a policy allowing
 12 passengers to write letters of complaint about in-
 13 flight service which would end up in the attendants’
 14 files, regardless of how valid the complaint” (Kramer,
 15 1999, p. 591). More recently, Moore-Ede (1993)
 16 found that a requirement for long-distance truck
 17 drivers to keep detailed logs of their driving time led
 18 to counterproductive behavior, and encouraged
 19 some drivers to evidence distrust by keeping two
 20 sets of logs, one for company inspections and one
 21 that represented their actual behavior.

22 **Positive Individual Characteristics** 23 **Influencing Leaders’ Trust-building**

24 Cameron (2008) specifically identified positive lead-
 25 ership within the positive scholarship domain.
 26 Positive leaders focus on enabling “positively deviant
 27 performance, foster an affirmative orientation in
 28 organizations, and engender a focus on virtuousness”
 29 (Cameron, 2008, p. 1). He has identified four strate-
 30 gies that positive leaders cultivate to create a flourish-
 31 ing environment: create a positive climate, develop
 32 positive relationships, encourage and use positive
 33 communication, and provide positive meaning
 34 (Cameron, 2008, p. xi). Cameron (2008) submits
 35 that a leader can focus on positively deviant behav-
 36 iors whether or not he or she is placed into a positive
 37 or a negative environment.

38 First, positive leaders create a positive climate by
 39 emphasizing the positive and growing aspects of
 40 their organizations, even in the face of a crisis
 41 (Cameron, 2008). Positive leaders develop a posi-
 42 tive climate through demonstrating compassion,
 43 offering forgiveness, and expressing gratitude
 44 (Cameron, 2008, p. 23). Positive leadership through
 45 a positive climate leads to people in that organiza-
 46 tion acting in a more creative fashion. Positive lead-
 47 ers also create positive relationships when they build
 48 positive energy networks and reinforce individual’s
 49 strengths (Cameron, 2008, p. 42). Other scholars
 50 have found that this positive network is more impor-
 51 tant in an individual’s success in the organization
 52 than is his or her actual position in the organization

(Baker, 2004). In addition, Baker (2004) found 53
 that “high-performing organizations have three 54
 times more positive energizers than average organi- 55
 zations” (Cameron, 2008, p. 43). In addition, the 56
 Gallup organization has also found that a focus on 57
 strengths, rather than weaknesses, can energize an 58
 individual to better performance (Buckingham & 59
 Clifton, 2001). 60

Positive communication is just as important in 61
 creating a positive work environment. Cameron 62
 (2008) found that a high-performance team in a 63
 positive organization provided more positive than 64
 negative comments to team members. This factor 65
 alone predicted organizational performance. This is 66
 likely because it contributes to a sense of connectiv- 67
 ity among team members, thus increasing levels of 68
 trust. Finally, a positive leader contributes to a posi- 69
 tive organizational culture by providing positive 70
 meaning. Positive meaning contributes to organiza- 71
 tional performance and trust. Positive meaning 72
 is built by work having a positive impact, work 73
 aligned with personal value, work whose impact is 74
 long lasting, and work that builds supportive rela- 75
 tionships (Cameron, 2008, p. 72–73). All of these 76
 strategies allow a positive leader to create a positive 77
 organization. 78

Previous empirical studies show that trust in 79
 leaders is positively related to POS-related constructs 80
 and characteristics. In two separate studies of several 81
 hundred nurses each, structural equation models 82
 showed that empowerment, interactional justice, 83
 and recognition for work were positively related 84
 to the respect nurses felt they received from their 85
 managers and peers, which in turn was positively 86
 related to the trust they had in their managers 87
 (Laschinger, 2004; Laschinger & Finegan, 2005). 88
 In a study of two different consulting organizations, 89
 Six and Sorge (2008) found a number of factors 90
 that differentiated the organization with stronger 91
 interpersonal trust from the weaker one, including 92
 giving positive feedback or compliments, showing 93
 care and concern for others, and surfacing and set- 94
 tling differences in expectations. More generally, 95
 leaders who are trusted by their followers, particu- 96
 larly in terms of their competence, are more easily 97
 able to effect change quickly in their organization 98
 (Gabarro, 1987). 99

100 **Courage, Humility, and Authenticity as Key** 101 **Positive Leadership Characteristics**

102 In our own research about many different
 103 kinds of leaders, we found that when the leader
 104 took the initiative to first demonstrate his or her

1 trustworthiness, others within the organization (and
 2 often outside of it) came to trust the leader, and
 3 through that trust, acted in positive ways that led to
 4 lasting change and performance improvements.
 5 These positive results then helped to affirm the lead-
 6 ers' trustworthiness and trust-building efforts. We
 7 found that this "virtuous trust cycle" often depended
 8 on three critical leadership characteristics: courage,
 9 authenticity, and humility (Mishra & Mishra,
 10 2008). Leaders' courage made it easier for them to
 11 be vulnerable to others, for example by sharing sen-
 12 sitive information or by empowering rank-and-file
 13 employees. Leaders' humility also encouraged them
 14 to be vulnerable to their followers, and even moti-
 15 vated these followers to build trust with one another
 16 by acknowledging their collective vulnerability. By
 17 admitting that they didn't hold all the answers and
 18 that they were just as dependent on their followers
 19 as the followers were on them, humble leaders fostered
 20 a sense of shared fate that is so often missing in
 21 organizations, especially those facing adverse cir-
 22 cumstances. Finally, leaders' authenticity encour-
 23 aged others in turn to be vulnerable to them. This
 24 authenticity in terms of transparent values and
 25 motives, coupled with behaviors that strongly cor-
 26 responded to these values and motives, reassured
 27 followers and others that these leaders' motives,
 28 values, or goals did not need to be second-guessed
 29 and that trusting actions could be reciprocated
 30 without fear of being taken advantage of or receiv-
 31 ing punishment. In contrast to organizations that
 32 often compete over resources, especially when faced
 33 with a threat or crisis, we found that organizations
 34 led by humble and trustworthy leaders instead uti-
 35 lized collaborative approaches to allocating resources.
 36 Building on prior POS research, we then argue that
 37 three characteristics typically ascribed to positive
 38 leaders—courage, humility, and authenticity—will
 39 contribute to their tendency to build trust with
 40 their stakeholders.

41 **Courage**

42 We define a leader's courage as a willingness to con-
 43 front the status quo (Worline & Quinn, 2003),
 44 based on confidence in the future (Luthans &
 45 Avolio, 2003) and self-confidence about one's own
 46 ability to make a difference. Following Mishra and
 47 Mishra (2008), we argue that leaders who possess
 48 greater courage are expected to engage in greater
 49 trust-building efforts. To the extent that it requires
 50 courage to admit one's mistakes, a leader who pos-
 51 sesses greater courage will then be more willing to
 52 build trust with others in order to overcome those

mistakes. A leader who possesses a greater willing- 53
 ness to confront the status quo is also more likely to 54
 see the need to induce others' cooperation in over- 55
 coming this status quo, and cooperation is enhanced 56
 by trust. Courage based on greater confidence in the 57
 future will also induce leaders to build the trust that 58
 is necessary to involve others in creating such a 59
 future. It may be also be possible that leaders pos- 60
 sessing greater self-confidence may have stronger 61
 generalized predispositions to trust others (Rotter, 62
 1967), and therefore they would be more likely to 63
 build trust with others. 64

Humility

Humility is also an important characteristic posed 65
 by leaders who are more likely to build trust 66
 with others. Nielsen, Marrone, and Slay (2010) 67
 defines humility as "a desirable personal quality 68
 reflecting the willingness to understand the self 69
 (identities, strengths, limitations), combined with 70
 perspective in the self's relationships with others 71
 (i.e., perspective that one is not the center of the 72
 universe). Humble leaders remain aware of and 73
 accept their vulnerabilities and openly discuss them 74
 with associates, so that they can be questioned to 75
 ensure that they are heading in the right direction 76
 (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Humble leaders are also 77
 interested in how others perceive them and integrate 78
 this information with how they perceive themselves 79
 (Nielsen et al., 2010). Humility can be developed in 80
 leaders (Owens, Rowatt, & Wilkins, Chapter 20, 81
 this volume), and because humble leaders are open 82
 to receiving feedback from others, they should be 83
 more likely to build trust with others in order to 84
 receive feedback that is as complete as possible. 85
 86

Authenticity

Authenticity is the third key characteristic of a leader 87
 who is likely to build trust with others. This leader 88
 lives the values that he or she preaches. Authentic 89
 leadership is defined as "a pattern of leader behavior 90
 that draws upon and promotes both positive psy- 91
 chological capacities and a positive ethical climate, 92
 to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized 93
 moral perspective, balanced processing of informa- 94
 tion, and relational transparency of the part of lead- 95
 ers working with followers, fostering positive self 96
 development" (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, 97
 Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008, p. 94). Authentic 98
 leaders have no gaps between their words and 99
 actions, and thus no hypocrisy (Luthans & Avolio, 100
 2003). An authentic leader is also self-aware, owning 101
 his personal experience and acting with the true self 102
 103

1 (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Authentic leaders possess a deep sense of self-awareness that informs their actions. As a result, authentic leaders “are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values or moral perspectives” (Helland & Winston, 2005). This allows authentic leaders to have the moral capacity to judge issues and circumstances involving “shades of grey” (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Because their authenticity is in large part based on relationships with others, it is likely that authentic leaders will be more likely to build trust with those others, to deepen the integration between their espoused values and their own actions.

14 ***Courage, Humility, and Authenticity Often Go Together***

15 In our previous work, we often found that courage, humility, and authenticity often coexisted within leaders who were effective at building trust and demonstrating trustworthiness (Mishra & Mishra, 2008). This is perhaps not surprising, given that “humility tempers other virtues, opens one to the influence and needs of others, and insists on reality rather than pretense” (Owens et al., 2011, Chapter 20, this volume). Luthans and Avolio (2003) argue that authentic leadership can be developed, as can other attributes such as moral reasoning, capacity, confidence, hope, optimism, resiliency, and future orientation. Authentic leaders are often courageous as well, leading from the front, and going in advance of others when there is a risk in doing so (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). They are easily motivated to work harder, more satisfied and possessing high morale, and they have high levels of motivational aspiration and set stretch goals. They persevere in the face of obstacles and difficulties; they analyze personal failures and setbacks as temporary, if not as learning experiences, and they view them as one-time, unique circumstances. Authentic leaders also tend to feel upbeat and invigorated both physically and mentally (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Space limitations prevent further elaboration as to how courage, humility, and authentic may covary or even reinforce one another, but please see Owens et al. (2011, Chapter 20, this volume), for a rich discussion. Because of their positive relationship with such constructs as hope, optimism, and values, we believe that courage, humility, and authenticity are likely to have a strong influence upon affective components of trust, and not just trust’s cognitive components.

50 As an example from our two decades of research, 51 Bob Lintz, a leader who ran an automotive stamping 52 plant in Parma, Ohio, compellingly demonstrated

to us courage, humility, and authenticity. Bob took the Parma plant, which in the early 1980s was a \$250 million annual revenue operation that was scheduled to be shut down in 3 years, and successfully turned the facility around over the course of several years. Today, it remains in operation, and is one of the highest-quality, most productive stamping plants in the world (Mishra & Mishra, 2008). His particular approach to building trust show how courage, humility, and authenticity all enhance a leader’s ability and motivation to build trust with a wide variety of stakeholders, and build lasting positive change as well.

Bob asked the local United Auto Workers (UAW) for help in turning around the Parma stamping plant based on his own experience working at GM. This experience led him to understand that asking for help was essential in creating lasting positive changes. He shared critical business information that normally was restricted to senior management, first with Parma’s UAW leaders, and ultimately with all of the hourly employees. Such sharing of information required courage from Bob, as he could have been reprimanded by his superiors for doing so. Asking for help demonstrated Bob’s courage and humility because he openly acknowledged that he and the rest of the management team didn’t have all the answers, when at the time, it was cultural norm for managers to in fact act as if they did have all the answers. Demonstrating courage and humility in this way also contributed to Bob’s trusting the UAW leadership, because they could have interpreted a request for help as a sign of weakness (and often did based on previous instances). The approach Bob used to ask for help also evidenced his authenticity. He had learned at the very beginning of his career at GM in the 1960s just how important help was from others in creating positive change, even if that help came from people his superiors had told him not to trust (i.e., union employees).

I had 30 people working for me from day one. Management assumed that I knew everything because I was a college graduate, but I really had no idea what I was supposed to do because I’d only received a 4-hour training program. I would try to talk to my fellow supervisors, but because I was a college graduate, and they weren’t, they wouldn’t talk to me. Instead of having college degrees, those supervisors got their jobs because they were the best at telling people what to do by cussing at them.

On the other hand, the hourly UAW people, the ones who worked for me, went out of their way to

1 help me. It didn't take long before I realized that the
 2 good guys were the hourly employees. As their new
 3 supervisor, I had told them that "I'm going to have to
 4 rely on you folks to help me." My hourly employees
 5 really liked being asked for help. At the time, I was
 6 too naïve to understand how different I was from the
 7 traditional guy who came up through the ranks, and
 8 later I realized how critical it was to influence others
 9 in the organization by simply asking for help.

10 When asked recently what some of the turning
 11 points were in transforming the Parma plant into a
 12 trust-based culture, Bob mentioned this example:

13 The regional head of the UAW had the wisdom to
 14 ask me to address all of the hourly people in a union
 15 meeting, even though that had never been done at
 16 General Motors. Management people were simply
 17 not allowed at union meetings. The regional UAW
 18 guy introduced me as having an important message:
 19 the reality of our business. I started to give my
 20 presentation and started hearing all these catcalls
 21 from throughout the plant, "Get him out of here.
 22 Get him out of here. No management people in a
 23 union meeting." It got to a point where I couldn't
 24 even speak any longer. So, the regional guy gets up
 25 and says, "give the man an opportunity, he's trying to
 26 help you." For a union leader to talk about a
 27 management guy as really sincere and trying to help
 28 was unheard of.

29 Bob's humble act of going to a formal UAW
 30 meeting represented an act of trust because even
 31 though he was the top manager at the Parma stamp-
 32 ing plant, its UAW membership had ridiculed him
 33 many times during management-union meetings.
 34 So, it was very likely that when Bob went to
 35 their own meeting, where the UAW controlled the
 36 situation, they would be emboldened to act even
 37 more negatively. His willingness to expose himself
 38 in this manner led the way toward his building
 39 a more trust-based relationship with the Parma
 40 plant's UAW leadership and its rank-and-file hourly
 41 employees.

42 This meeting was not only an act of trust on
 43 Bob's part, but also an opportunity for him to dem-
 44 onstrate his trustworthiness. He did this by listen-
 45 ing as well as articulating his future vision. Bob gave
 46 the union employees same opportunity to articulate
 47 reasons why the plant needed to change the way it
 48 operated. The local UAW, with support from their
 49 national UAW bosses, provided him with a trusted
 50 platform, the union meeting, to talk about the state
 51 of the business, and to articulate how everyone

would have to work together if Parma were to win 52
 new business and avoid certain closure. The paradox 53
 then, for Bob and other leaders that we've studied 54
 like him, is that, in order for others to trust them, 55
 these leaders must often first demonstrate through 56
 their own behaviors that they trust their followers, 57
 even when those followers haven't previously justi- 58
 fied such trust. 59

The Specific Ways That Leaders 60 Demonstrate Trustworthiness 61

In our research, we have identified four ways in 62
 which leaders have successfully built trust with their 63
 constituents: reliability, openness, competence, and 64
 compassion (ROCC; Mishra & Mishra, 1994). The 65
 first dimension of trustworthiness is reliability. This 66
 dimension is often what people recognize first in 67
 dealing with others, including their leaders: Do they 68
 show up on time? Do they follow-up as promised? 69
 Reliability entails being consistent in words and 70
 actions, and leaders who are trusted in terms of their 71
 reliability follow through as they say they will. 72
 Individuals are more likely to trust a leader who is 73
 reliable because it reduces uncertainty regarding the 74
 leader's behavior. We argue that reliability should be 75
 a critical dimension of trustworthiness because there 76
 is a higher degree of interdependence in a POS 77
 system than in non-POS systems. Actors must be 78
 able to be counted upon to behave consistently and 79
 reliably; without reliable actions, highly interdepend- 80
 ent coordination is impossible. 81

Leaders demonstrate their openness by sharing 82
 information and being honest with others. At a 83
 minimum, being open means not lying to another 84
 person. At its greatest level, it means full disclosure. 85
 Trustworthiness in terms of openness takes longer 86
 to develop than does reliability-based trustworthi- 87
 ness because it involves not only speaking merely 88
 the truth, but also revealing information about one's 89
 intentions and expectations, and for a leader, that 90
 can involve highly sensitive information. A leaders' 91
 openness also reduces uncertainty for followers, and 92
 thus leads them to trust the leader more. In a POS 93
 system, such openness should be especially relevant 94
 as a trustworthiness dimension because high perfor- 95
 mance depends on information that is not only 96
 timely but accurate (Gittell, 2003, p. 282). 97

Leaders demonstrate their competence by meet- 98
 ing and exceeding performance expectations and 99
 delivering results that support their organization's 100
 strategic goals and objectives. Followers want to 101
 know that they can depend on their leader to be 102
 competent to solve problems and lead them through 103

1 to a solution. Because POS focuses on the develop-
2 ment of talents and strengths instead of weaknesses,
3 followers are more likely to respond to a leader's
4 developmental efforts if they believe the leader has
5 the knowledge and abilities necessary to hone their
6 talents and strengths.

7 Finally, leaders can demonstrate their trustwor-
8 thiness in terms of their compassion. Compassion
9 can take a great deal of time to demonstrate because
10 it requires first an understanding or empathy for the
11 other party's needs and interests, and then, as
12 Luthans and Avolio (2003) argue, a willingness to
13 further those needs and interests. Whereas Lilius,
14 Worline, Maitlis, Kanov, Dutton, and Frost (2008)
15 found that most acts of compassion came from
16 a coworker, we suggest that acts of compassion
17 from a leader can also go a long way toward build-
18 ing positive connections with employees. Leaders
19 have greater authority and access to provide the
20 material resources that can foster followers' interests
21 than do coworkers. Lilius et al. (2008) did find that
22 acts of compassion generated perceptions of sup-
23 port and strengthened organizational commitment.
24 Accordingly, a leader who demonstrates compassion
25 is likely to promote those relationships that foster
26 individual and collective growth.

27 **How Trustworthy Leaders Create Cultures** 28 **of Enduring, Positive Change and Trust**

29 In the sections below, we will attempt to demon-
30 strate through examples gleaned from our ongoing
31 research program how leaders create lasting positive
32 changes in their organizations through two key pro-
33 cesses: creating and sustaining hope and empower-
34 ing others. These positive changes not only
35 reinforced the leaders' trustworthiness and justified
36 their initial efforts to build trust, but they also cre-
37 ated cultures of trust that have endured, in some
38 cases, for decades, even years after the leader left the
39 organization.

40 *Creating and Sustaining Hope*

41 One way in which leaders develop lasting positive
42 changes and a culture of trust within their organiza-
43 tions is through creating and sustaining hope.
44 Hope is defined as an activating force that enables
45 people, even when faced with the most overwhelm-
46 ing obstacles, to envision a promising future and
47 to set and pursue goals (Helland & Winston, 2005).
48 It is not surprising to us that trust and hope often
49 go together in the context of positive change, as
50 both are *relational* constructs. Ludema, Wilmot,
51 and Srivastva (1997) define four enduring qualities

of hope as being "a) born in relationships, b) inspired 52
by the conviction that the future is open and can be 53
influenced, c) sustained by dialogue about high 54
human ideals, and d) generative of positive action" 55
(p. 9). Like hope, leadership arises in relationship 56
with others. 57

Peterson and Luthans (2003) describe hopeful 58
leaders as possessing both *willpower* (agency) and 59
waypower (alternate pathways). In their study of 60
high-hope leaders, they found that these leaders (as 61
compared to low-hope leaders) led more profitable 62
organizations and had better retention and satisfac- 63
tion rates among subordinates. Thus, hopeful lead- 64
ers produce positive organizational results. Other 65
research has found that, by demonstrating trustwor- 66
thiness, leaders can engender hopeful responses 67
among their followers in threatening contexts, such 68
as crisis or downsizing, in which organizational 69
members are vulnerable (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998; 70
Spreitzer & Mishra, 2000). 71

In our research, some of the most compel- 72
ling examples of leaders fostering hope in others 73
take place in health care contexts. This is not sur- 74
prising, given that the hope for healing is what 75
patients are looking for when they consult a physi- 76
cian or surgeon. 77

Kevin Lobdell, M.D., is director of Adult and 78
Pediatric CV Critical Care, and is associate director 79
of the Cardiothoracic Residency Program at 80
Carolinas Heart and Vascular Institute in Charlotte, 81
North Carolina. He has found his niche in stream- 82
lining surgical care, and has optimized a process for 83
improving the time cardiac surgical patients are 84
extubated after surgery by over 100%; now, as many 85
as 80% of patients are extubated within 6 hours 86
(Lobdell et al., 2009). He and his team have reduced 87
mortality by nearly 50%, sepsis by 50%, and acute 88
renal failure by 37.5%, while improving operational 89
efficiency by reducing ICU and hospital length of 90
stays (Lobdell et al., 2009). 91

These outcomes were achieved partly because 92
Dr. Lobdell engendered optimism and confidence 93
within his hospital unit by sharing data widely with 94
fellow physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, and 95
other staff members, and by building these individ- 96
uals into a cohesive team through a common goal. 97
Dr. Lobdell argues that communicating honestly, 98
directly, and humbly while maintaining a relentless 99
sense of optimism have been essential to the unit's 100
success (Mishra & Mishra, 2008). "High-hope indi- 101
viduals tend to be more certain of their goals and 102
challenged by them; value progress toward goals as 103
well as the goals themselves; enjoy interacting with 104

1 others and readily adapt to new and collabora-
 2 tive relationships; are less anxious, especially in
 3 evaluative, stressful situations; and are more adap-
 4 tive to environmental change” (Peterson & Luthans,
 5 2003: p. 27).

6 A key way in which Dr. Lobdell works to resolve
 7 conflicts with his colleagues in this highly stressful
 8 work environment is through informal communi-
 9 cation, and in particular through discussing his col-
 10 leagues’ children. We argue that this reinforces his
 11 authenticity, as he is indeed responsible for a number
 12 of very sick child patients in his unit. Dr. Lobdell
 13 has found this to be important in demonstrating his
 14 compassion for his team members and for them to
 15 find common ground with each other. We believe
 16 that by establishing this common ground, he has
 17 enabled them to trust each other more, and use that
 18 trust to make their patients better much more
 19 quickly.

20 *Empowering Others*

21 Another way in which leaders develop lasting posi-
 22 tive changes and a culture of trust within their orga-
 23 nizations is by empowering others. We define
 24 empowerment as a personal sense of control in the
 25 workplace, as manifested in four beliefs about the
 26 person–work relationship: meaning, competence,
 27 self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995).
 28 Meaning reflects a sense of purpose or personal con-
 29 nection about work, which helps individuals cope
 30 better with uncertainty. Leaders who help enhance
 31 individuals’ empowerment in terms of competence,
 32 or a belief that they have the skills and abilities nec-
 33 essary to perform their work well, provide them
 34 with another coping resource to deal with changes
 35 at work. By enhancing their followers’ empower-
 36 ment in terms of self-determination, which is a
 37 sense of freedom about how individuals do their
 38 own work, leaders help them feel a greater sense of
 39 control over any threatening or challenging work
 40 changes. By increasing followers’ empowerment in
 41 terms of impact, leaders are able to help their fol-
 42 lowers feel that they can influence changes in the
 43 organization through their actions. We focus on
 44 empowerment because we argue that empowering
 45 others is a form of trusting them. It involves not
 46 only transferring authority from leaders to followers
 47 (Spreitzer & Mishra, 1999), but also sharing the
 48 responsibility for co-creating a meaningful, high-
 49 impact, and collaboratively designed organizational
 50 system.

51 By being true to themselves, authentic leaders’
 52 exhibited behavior positively transforms and develops

their associates into leaders themselves (Luthans & 53
 Avolio, 2003), thus empowering them. More spe- 54
 cifically, authentic leaders are guided by a set of end 55
 values that are oriented toward doing what’s right 56
 for their constituency, in which the individual has 57
 something positive to contribute to the group, and 58
 they model these values rather than using coercion 59
 or even persuasion (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). 60
 Authentic leaders are also equally focused on devel- 61
 oping others and task accomplishment (Luthans & 62
 Avolio, 2003). In this manner, leaders will be 63
 enhancing followers’ empowerment in all four 64
 dimensions. When leaders help others to identify 65
 and nurture their strengths, they build awareness of 66
 possibilities and encourage others to take coura- 67
 geous action to become their hoped-for possible 68
 selves (Spreitzer, 2006). 69

70 Bob Lintz is also a great example of a leader who
 71 empowers others, especially in a context when it was
 72 not popular to do so. First, he provided others with
 73 a sense of meaning by giving them accurate and
 74 honest information about the state of the plant, and
 75 he let them know that their participation would
 76 help determine the fate of the plant’s existence. In
 77 this way, he let them know that he was depending
 78 on them for their help to make sure that the plant
 79 did not fail. He was making it clear that their com-
 80 petence would make the difference between their
 81 plant surviving or closing. In addition, he provided
 82 them with the necessary team training to work effi-
 83 ciently and effectively together to generate new
 84 ideas to keep their plant open. By providing this
 85 training, he gave them a sense of competence and
 86 self-determination, knowing that their plant’s future
 87 was now in their hands as much as it was in his.
 88 Finally, when the teams came up with new ideas for
 89 how to improve business practices or how to create
 90 new business from other plants, he asked them to
 91 present their findings to external customers and
 92 other GM executives, so that they could see the
 93 impact of their work. When the teams became suc-
 94 cessful in generating new business for the plant
 95 based upon their own ideas, they became co-owners
 96 of the process to keep Parma alive and thriving.

97 *Creating Cultures of Trust*

98 By achieving lasting, positive changes through
 99 creating hope and empowering their followers,
 100 trustworthy leaders will be able to develop cultures
 101 of trust in which organizational members not
 102 only trust their leaders, but also trust one another
 103 and identify with a common set of values incorpo-
 104 rating the four key dimensions of trustworthiness.

1 Building and aligning a positive, collective identifi-
 2 cation with an organization’s mission and values is
 3 one of the most important responsibilities of
 4 authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). To
 5 the extent that those values emphasize personal and
 6 collective competence, the organization can become
 7 what Gallup calls a strengths-based organization
 8 (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Luthans & Avolio,
 9 2003). More generally, leaders intent on creating
 10 change quickly and enduringly should focus on
 11 building a culture of trust (Gabarro, 1978).

12 The leaders we’ve studied built trust not only
 13 among individuals with whom they directly inter-
 14 acted, but also by using broader efforts to instill the
 15 ROCC of Trust throughout their organizations and
 16 key external stakeholders. By building trust through
 17 ROCC, leaders modeled their trustworthiness, thus
 18 encouraging their followers to reciprocate. Our
 19 leaders built cultures of reliability-based trust by
 20 fostering the development of norms, processes, and
 21 systems that made high performance replicable, and
 22 by developing institutional mechanisms that
 23 reminded others of their commitments and made
 24 them more likely to keep them. Our leaders built a
 25 culture of trust based on openness by providing
 26 opportunities for their employees to talk with them
 27 without fear of reprisal, and by being transparent in
 28 their communications, often sharing sensitive infor-
 29 mation about company performance and other
 30 important issues. Leaders established competence-
 31 based trust throughout the organization by estab-
 32 lishing high standards of excellence, with clearly
 33 defined metrics. Leaders built compassion-based
 34 trust—the form of trust that takes the longest time
 35 to build and is often the toughest piece of the
 36 ROCC of Trust—by demonstrating empathy in
 37 tangible and convincing ways, by personally making
 38 symbolic and substantive sacrifices for the better-
 39 ment of the organization and demanding the same
 40 of their subordinates, and by developing innovative
 41 ways to save jobs during periods of organizational
 42 crisis or economic upheaval.

43 As a result of these efforts, they created lasting,
 44 positive changes in their organizations, and estab-
 45 lished a set of expectations and values that are deeply
 46 embedded in their organizations. As one compel-
 47 ling example, we discuss Two Men and Truck,
 48 International, Inc. (TMT), a \$200 million enter-
 49 prise founded by Mary Ellen Sheets in 1985 with a
 50 \$350 investment in a used truck. We have been
 51 studying Two Men and a Truck, International for
 52 over a decade (Mishra & Mishra, 2008). It is the
 53 largest local moving company in the United States,

with over 200 franchisees in the United States, 54
 Canada, and Ireland. 55

Two Men and a Truck and its leaders established 56
 system-wide trust in terms of reliability and compe- 57
 tence in many ways, including developing highly 58
 consistent work standards, industry-leading 59
 employee and franchisee training, and a franchise 60
 agreement that creates clear expectations for the 61
 franchisor, franchisees, and all of their customers. 62
 They also built trust in terms of competence by 63
 explicitly hiring “people brighter than they are from 64
 the firm’s outset,” according to the leaders of TMT, 65
 and by insisting that this “smarter than I am” 66
 approach to managing was adopted by anyone 67
 responsible for recruiting, selecting, developing, or 68
 retaining personnel. TMT fostered a culture of trust 69
 in terms of openness by sharing sensitive informa- 70
 tion about each of their 200 franchises with every 71
 franchise in the system, including operating perfor- 72
 mance, financial information, and marketing tac- 73
 tics. Over many years, this trusting and 74
 trust-building behavior initiated by TMT’s top 75
 management has helped its franchises view one 76
 another not as competitors, but as collaborators, 77
 helping one another to improve each other’s opera- 78
 tions and grow the entire franchise system quickly 79
 and profitably. Finally, from the founder’s initial act 80
 of compassion—donating the entire first year’s prof- 81
 its to charity—TMT has evolved its compassion- 82
 based culture through its “Movers Who Care” 83
 trademark and its core values that include “Care,” 84
 “Give back to the community,” and the “Grandma 85
 rule.” These and other TMT initiatives have resulted 86
 in a tightly knit franchise system that is encouraging 87
 of each other and is trusting of the home office. 88
 TMT has demonstrated that the actions of leaders 89
 can result in a trust-based culture that can have both 90
 cultural and financial benefits. 91

Future Directions 92

- *How long does it take to build a trusting 93*
culture in a positive organization? In two of 94
 the examples we highlighted, Bob from 95
 Parma and the Two Men and a Truck family, 96
 both worked to build trust over a period of 97
 several years, and then spent several more 98
 years working to sustain the trust they had 99
 built. We know that trust takes time to 100
 build, and in both cases, these leaders had 101
 significant time in which to build a trusting 102
 culture. What happens when a leader is new 103
 to a culture or enters a turn-around 104

1 situation? Would these characteristics of
 2 courage, authenticity, and humility facilitate
 3 the four dimensions of trust in the same way
 4 with less time?
 5 • *What is the role of strengths in building trust?*
 6 The Gallup Organization’s Strengths-based
 7 assessments have gained widespread use
 8 among practitioners. Positive organizational
 9 researchers have also begun examining a
 10 strengths-based approach to leading and
 11 manager (Roberts, Caza, Heaphy, Spreitzer,
 12 & Dutton, in progress; Spreitzer, Stephens,
 13 & Sweetman, 2009). We would like to know
 14 what the effect would be on trust within an
 15 organization if a leader managed from a
 16 viewpoint of strengths instead of weaknesses,
 17 and what would it require, in turn, from the
 18 rest of the organization.
 19 • *Are trustworthy leaders made or born?* In
 20 light of the fact that we believe that courage,
 21 authenticity, and humility underpin
 22 trustworthy leaders, it would be interesting to
 23 discover how a leader develops these
 24 characteristics. To what extent do leaders
 25 develop these characteristics early in life, or can
 26 they acquire them in adulthood? We do believe
 27 that the leader’s ability to build trust can be a
 28 foundation for lasting positive change/culture,
 29 and that the ability to demonstrate
 30 trustworthiness and build trust can be learned.
 31 The challenge is to help practitioners find the
 32 best ways in which to do so.
 33 • *Is the process for rebuilding trust the same as*
 34 *building trust?* How trust can be repaired
 35 once it has been violated remains a fruitful
 36 area for research. We have found it difficult
 37 to refute the truism that trust takes time to
 38 build, but once broken is very difficult to
 39 rebuild. Citing Slovic (1993), Kramer (1999,
 40 p. 593) notes that “negative (trust-
 41 destroying) events are more visible and
 42 noticeable than positive (trust-building)
 43 events (and) trust-destroying events carry
 44 more weight in judgment than trust-
 45 building events of comparable magnitude.”
 46 Although we would like to focus on the
 47 positive aspects of a trustworthy leader, we
 48 must acknowledge that there are times when
 49 a leader must enter an organization in which
 50 trust has been lost or violated, and must
 51 endeavor to rebuild trust to create a new and
 52 more positive organization if the
 53 organization is to survive. What steps must

a leader take in this type of situation? How
 can a leader overcome broken promises and
 negativity to gain the confidence of an
 organization?

Conclusion

Despite some of the lowest levels of trust in business
 and government ever polled, there is hope for lead-
 ers who aspire to create positive organizations.
 Trusted leaders can create powerful results for their
 organizations by believing in the goodness of their
 employees and their ability to create a positive per-
 formance for the organization. By trusting their
 employees, leaders create a virtuous cycle of trust
 that permeates throughout the organization,
 enabling behaviors and outcomes that would not
 exist without such trust. Leaders’ courage, authen-
 ticity, and humility allow them to both become
 more trusting of their subordinates, and help to
 demonstrate their trustworthiness to these individu-
 als. When leaders demonstrate their reliability,
 openness, competence, and compassion, they are
 viewed as more trustworthy, and are more able to
 create and sustain hope among their followers, and
 empower them as well. Such hope and empower-
 ment are critical to creating and sustaining lasting
 and positive change and a trust-based culture.

We also need to consider whether trust and
 trustworthiness are always something that leaders
 want to build. As vulnerability is at the core of trust,
 trusting too much can result in significant, often
 devastating, losses. In addition, building trust takes
 significant time and resources, even if it is to simply
 demonstrate one’s trustworthiness, and leaders and
 organizations do not have limitless resources. Finally,
 leaders must always be making choices, and choos-
 ing to build trust with one set of individuals means
 choosing not to do so with others, at least in the
 short term. Leaders, then, must depend on their
 hard-won wisdom to be able to build trust with the
 right people at the right time.

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