

Or am I being indelicate with these questions?

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“Do You Trust Me?”

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Breaking personal trust takes patience and effort to restore the trust. Trust me on this. I’ve had my trust broken and, shamefully, I have broken trust with friends, parents, wife, children, with the person I thought I was, ultimately with my Lord. It takes a long time for brokenness to heal and rehabilitate. Broken relationships are far harder to heal than any fractured femur. Yet they say a healed fracture is stronger. I don’t know. Let’s hope amends mend. What I’ve learnt is how trust must be earned. I’m a big believer in redemption, in new lyrics to an old song.

Trust me. Why should I? Do I really know you? To be trusted, you need to first prove yourself trustworthy. There will be a reckoning.

Are there any parents out there who returned home early to be surprised to find all the chores done, lawn mowed, dishwasher emptied, laundry folded, homework completed? Are there any parents out there who have returned early only to find the remnants of a party having taken place? Bottles of spiced rum in the trash. Kitty still in hiding. Rugs askew. Tire tracks on the lawn. A section of the wall repainted? I won’t ask for a show of hands.

Professional trust, based upon a transactional contractual relationship, is cleaner and better defined than personal trust. You trust someone to do their job in exchange for money. If the contract is broken, there are penalties. Trust is heightened when the potential loss is greater. You trust your car will be protected at the airport lot. You trust the mechanics have engineered a car engine that will turn over after 11 days left out in the bitter chill. You trust that the pilot knows how to fly a plane and isn’t inebriated. You trust, as Lee Iacocca advised, that airplane maintenance is reflected in the cleanliness of the tray tables. You trust that fellow passengers will obey the no smoking sign. By the way, why do they still display that glowing sign of a crossed out cigarette? For that matter, when did they remove ashtrays from the armrests? Equally curious, when did they stop installing cigarette lighters and ashtrays in cars? We’ve changed so much in so few years.

Trust is the basis for both our personal and professional relationships. It is the glue binding all social interactions. We trust folks will play by the rules, that they’ll respect all persons. They’ll obey the stop sign at Meadow and Maple. Companies always will do what’s right for the environment. Politicians always will act honorably.

This last comment makes me wonder about my friends who were enamored with Trump. How did that work out for you? What are you thinking now? Or am I being indelicate with these questions?

I understand what it is to be scammed. It was embarrassing but I learnt from it. It happened while tending the cash register at the family paint store. The fellow paid me. The problem was he watched as I stuck his bill into the till. I gave him his change, counting his change as Unk, a former banker, instructed me. You count backwards. \$7.99 is the bill. Here’s a penny. \$8.00. Two dollars for your \$10. He told me he gave me a \$20, not a ten. Unk advised me to first place the bill on the register; You put it into the till only after making change.

I no longer was an innocent. I really don't understand those who casually break your trust in people. Well, maybe I do, because I have.

"Trust everybody, but cut the cards." "Trust but verify." "In God we trust, all others pay cash." Trustworthiness requires the effort and energy of transparency, a willingness to let yourself be conspicuous. Yes, dear, here's my computer password. You bet boss, I'll get it done. Is how you behave in private exactly the same as how you behave in public? Is how you behave in public exactly the same as how you behave in private?

I'm working on it. This new year invites us to avoid giving cause for suspicion because if there is suspicion it already has destroyed the trust? Broken trust corrodes the chance for our human and divine relationships to prosper, to enjoy, to grow, to create positive opportunities.

There's a sign painted on the side of a barn above Millville. It reads: "In God We Trust." That's nice. Although, the better sign would ask: Can God trust in us?