

DARING TO TRUST

I was a high school freshman when a popular and...let's say, "visually appealing"...senior girl asked me to try out for the school's cheerleading squad. Once I got past the immature, hyper-masculine idea that "cheerleading is for girls," I showed up to practice and had one of the most powerful experiences of my life: lifting and holding another human being above my head!

Fastforward 7 years, and I was named the head captain of the cheer squad at the University of Texas (*hook 'em!*). Of the many lessons I learned along the way, the most important was that *trust* is essential to any successful enterprise. In executing complex acrobatic maneuvers, I had to trust that my partner would maintain her balance and stay calm, even when I got shaky or unstable beneath her feet. She, in turn, trusted in my ability to keep her in the air, and to catch her if (more like when) she fell. Neither one of us would be able to successfully perform our jobs if we failed to trust in one another.

It's the same in any organization, social setting, or business: without trust, we cannot hope to succeed. But herein lies the rub—before we allow ourselves to trust, we often look for evidence that the other person is *worthy* of being trusted. We proceed timidly, cautiously, until we can be sure our trust won't be broken, and we rely on past memories of betrayal, broken promises, and heartbreak as reassurance that this is a smart move. But trust is a two-way street, so our temerity is often met with similar indecisiveness. Thus, hesitance to engage fully becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy wherein trust does not (because it cannot) become realized; we unintentionally set the stage for mutual failure.

So what do we do?? *Go all-in from the outset.* Don't wait for trust to first be proven; it hardly ever will be. Instead, choose to trust others until you have a reason not to do so. Yes, this means taking a chance, and it will *absolutely* set you up for disappointment in the future...BUT, the rewards outweigh the risks. Failing to venture will ALWAYS yield failure to explore, to create, to achieve, and to succeed. At least by trusting in the possibilities, there's the chance for finding something greater. For me, it was the most memorable and amazing experiences of my life.

- **Trust others' promises (but still hold them accountable).** Excessive verification often leads to micromanagement. Once you delegate a task, show the other person that you trust in them to fulfill it; it's okay to check-in or request a progress update, but abstain from taking over.
- **Demonstrate your faith.** We don't have to question everything, all the time. Sometimes it's better to just *trust the process*, to have faith that our leaders know what they're doing (or know something we don't—like the larger picture). Trust until you are given evidence not to do so.
- **Try something new.** When we take "calculated" risks, we act with confidence that everything will be okay, regardless of the outcome. Look for new opportunities, and take advantage of new experiences; we stand to lose quite little in the process, but we have everything to gain!

