

## Who Can I Trust?

By Shaman Elder Maggie Wahls

Who can you trust? You have been lied to and cheated and betrayed many times in your life. We all have. It seems that you cannot trust anyone these days, or at least that is what we have been taught isn't it!

What is trust?

It is in knowing too that there is a certain amount of vulnerability isn't it; that you are not always in control.

True vulnerability means trusting and KNOWING that we are all ok on this journey, that we are loved and lovable and incredible beings who have come to learn and grow - and that therefore you can trust yourself to go through the tests of character that open the way to experiencing your own inner happiness.

But we are taught to not be vulnerable aren't we!

We consider vulnerability a weakness, just like asking for help; but we can learn and grow in our vulnerability? Yes if you understand that vulnerability means trusting that you are OK! We have some very misguided beliefs in this generation.

The belief or fear that life can't be trusted and that you will not be ok, where did we learn that?

Our parents and society

Our childhood

Church

Negative Life experiences

Why would someone lead you to believe this belief? Because they have been taught the same way.

If you were to teach this to a child, what reason would you have to do so? What would you be trying to get from that child?

Adoration

Obedience

Their dependence upon you

Yes to all the above.

And do our parents want us to be obedient and depend on them?

Yes

So of course they teach us the belief or fear that life can't be trusted and that you will not be ok.

But you are an adult now. Do you still need to keep this belief and be dependent and obedient?

Why not choose today to believe, trust and KNOW that we are all ok on this journey, that we are loved and lovable and that we are incredible beings who have come here to learn and grow.

Lets talk about control because it is also related.

Thinking that we can control life leads to a form of spiritual confusion and misconception. Control develops because there IS fear there: a fear of chaos, or a fear that somehow you aren't capable or adequate in some way, that life will spin out of control, etc. We cannot control life.

Who taught us this?

Our churches, our parents, grandparents; and why did they teach us this?

So we would be dependent and obedient! They taught us this, to help control us and need them, so we do what is required by them.

And as the people we are today, the adults here, do we still need this belief and need to be dependent and live in this man created fear? No.

What would be a better belief than this one that says we are not capable, that life will spin out of control?

The incredible trust in my guides and angels

That we are ok and our lives will be ok

That we are capable of doing anything

And we are OK!

We are spiritual beings having an earthly experience!

When we go home to heaven or whatever you call it, are we really hurt in any way by anything that happens here? No.

There is nothing here that can hurt the real true eternal you, so you are OK!

There is a need to be committed to self-love, forgiveness, and compassion. As you already recognize, your ability to trust life and to have faith in the future needs to be grown, developed, and nurtured. One of the best ways you can do this is to start expressing Gratitude and Appreciation, Thankfulness, on a "moment to moment" basis, for all that you have and experience in your life. An attitude of gratitude brings about deep trust and a sense of inner peace toward life.

Can you see this?

We have spent years feeling that we are out of control, cannot control, need to control, when what we really need to see is that we have been given beliefs that made us good children but do not benefit us now as adults.

Let them go!

Pick up a new benefiting belief in your own loving of yourself and Creator's love for you, in forgiveness of yourself since no one here can judge you but you anyway.  
And in compassion for you and others  
Believe in gratitude and appreciation  
Appreciate yourself, for goodness sake!  
And trust that all is in order.

You know how I love to tell the allegory of this life and Disneyland.  
When you go to Disneyland is there any order?  
Do you need order for a day in Disneyland?  
Don't you just run from one ride to the next all day and have fun?

This is what life is meant to be!  
An adventure!  
A day in Disneyland!

But there is nothing in Disneyland that really harms you.  
It may look scary, lots of thrills and spills but it is not harming the real you.

This is what life is.  
When you think of yourself as a spiritual being having an earthly existence you are so much more than your body!  
You are so much more than just your feeling or your mind!  
Do you have any idea how big your spiritual self is?  
How precious?  
How important?

What you are here physically in this earth is only 5% of the total you!  
Yet this is the part that we pay attention to only.  
This is the part that is so concerned about the job or the house or keeping up with the Joneses. The Joneses have no idea!

When we look at the Dalai Lama is he concerned about what kind of car he drives?

Does he feel his life will spin out of control any minute?

He knows that we are all OK!  
When you go to Disneyland do you control the rides?  
No  
You have to trust someone else don't you?  
A stranger no less!  
You have no problem with that.  
So why do you have a problem giving up control in this Disneyland? What is there to control?

Why not trust!

This life is to be experienced and lived and enjoyed just like Disneyland.

You go home safe and sound, I promise!

Why are we taught to make something of our lives? So we can get a good job and have a two-story house like the Joneses?

We are here to give of what we already possess, that is our mission.

No one taught us that, did they!

And you are not alone here. Creator is here with you at all times watching over you, protecting you, listening to you and willing to guide you completely if you will let Creator guide you.

What do we know about the other 95% of us or the rest of creation? Not much.

But what does Creator know? Everything! Creator created it!

So should we be like blind kids in a candy shop or should we listen to Creator who can tell us what is coming and what is best from Creator's view?

I would not want to be without Creator's guidance for one millisecond!

What does it take to be in Creator's guidance?

It takes a bit of time, and effort, and that is all. What a trade!

It takes you expressing gratitude, thankfulness that you have this intimate personal two way communication on a moment to moment basis.

An attitude of gratitude proves that you value this connection with Creator.

And if you value this always-available connection to insight and truth and guidance and protection you will listen to Creator. It is your choice. Creator will never violate your free will choice. Free will choice is one of the greatest gifts that Creator has given to every created thing. Creator will not take back the gift Creator has given you. You have free will to choose what you wish, to create the life you choose for yourself, and you are accountable for your choices, not Creator.

There are five elements to trust. Any one you choose to trust should demonstrate all five of these qualities consistently.

Truthfulness

Reliability

Consistency

Accountability

Follow through

## Reliability and Consistency

How trustworthy are you?

And who should you trust?

This e-book is meant to not only teach you about being trustworthy but also how to choose who to trust in your life.

We are not taught this.

And we make errors in who we trust and get ourselves into trouble don't we!

Undoubtedly!

So I want you to look at this study from both perspectives.

I thought I would give some more information about reliability and consistency, the first facets of trust.

A person who does as promised can be considered as reliable. Reliability is an admirable characteristic. People don't like to deal with those who are unreliable. They'd rather give their business and rewards to the person they can count on. Also, the reliable person feels good knowing that he or she is trusted.

Questions you may have are:

What does it mean to be reliable?

What is being unreliable?

How does reliability pay?

If you promise to do something, the other person assumes you are good for your word. Sometimes that promise is implied or assumed. Some people will renege on their word or responsibility for a number of possible reasons.

The person may have lied to get out of an uncomfortable or awkward situation and never intended to do what he said. Suppose someone asked you to come over to help with some task, which you did not really care to do. It may be easier to say you will, but then never show up. The other person would think you were unreliable, if this happened more than once.

Something more important may have come up. Suppose you agreed to meet someone, but then some friends came over and wanted to go out. So you never show up, because the other activity was more important to you. Being considerate and calling the other person would be awkward, so you don't bother.

A person at work is often late on completing assignments, either because they are too difficult or he gets sidetracked with more interesting activities. His boss and fellow workers consider him unreliable.

You cannot count on a person who is known to be unreliable, does not follow through on what he or she has promised to do. A person may promise to pick you up at the airport but then not show up, because "he forgot." Or a person may come to a meeting late, because she got involved in some other activity and lost track of time.

What happens with unreliable people is that they renege on their promises. They are unreliable because of the way they set their priorities. Their promise to you is not as important to them as something else.

I bet we have all encountered people like this.

Some people lack the skills to complete jobs. Some lie and have no intention of doing the job. Some have good intentions but are so forgetful or caught up in their own interests that they forget or don't bother to do what they promised.

Often, what they are saying is that you aren't as important. A person who is unreliable at work is saying that the job is not as important to them as some other activity.

A reliable person is one who has a track record of doing what he or she promised to do. If a person continually completes tasks she promised to do, she is then considered reliable. If a person says he will show up at 10:30, and he is known to be reliable, you can count on him to be on time.

Being considered reliable means that you are conscientious and keep your promises. A reliable person does not make excuses.

Certainly you would want to associate with a person you can count on. Supervisors want to keep employees that are reliable and who they can count on to come to work on time and to complete assigned tasks. Such a person is trusted to do as promised.

The benefits of being reliable are that people trust you and feel they can count on you. A reliable person will get and keep friends much easier than someone who is careless in personal relationships and can't be counted on to keep his or her word. A reliable worker will be trusted to do the job as promised and can reap the rewards of raises and promotions.

A business that has a reputation of being reliable or making reliable products will get repeat and new business, as well as reducing costs of rework or repair.

On the negative side of being considered reliable, there are situations where others can soon take you for granted and not appreciate your reliability. It is a trait of human nature that if something or someone is very predictable, then those actions are not appreciated.

Although it is possible to be taken advantage of by being reliable and predictable, in the long run reliability is the best way to be.

Being reliable is an admirable trait. We all dislike dealing with people who are unreliable, so being reliable is a character trait for which we should strive. People thank you for it. You get a good reputation. You also feel good about yourself when you do as promised.

It is a good feeling to be "a man of his word" or a "woman of her word."

A reliable person has a track record of keeping promises. An unreliable person shows he or she doesn't really care about others. You can't count on such a person. The benefits of being reliable include promotions at work, better personal relationships, and increased self-esteem.

Isn't it interesting that being reliable leads to a better sense of self esteem? That you can feel better about yourself by learning to be reliable for others? As you give, so do you get for you!

And isn't it interesting that when something is predictable we do not value it so much? Think about that!

So yes, reliability is certainly part of impeccability. Doing the very best you can do at all times.

It is also speaking your truth, isn't it.

And it is also about forming an intention and keeping that intention.

It is a shamanic trait.

The second part of reliability is **consistency**, so we are saying to be reliable all the time, not just sometimes or to certain people or promises. We all know what it means to be consistent. And consistency is part of being trustworthy. Do you see how being reliable and consistent is good for you personally?

Here is a little mini quiz.

Just pick your answer.

1. If you promise to help a friend move on Saturday, but then you start watching a good TV show, what should you do?

He probably has other helpers, so finish watching the show

Call him and say your grandma died

Keep your word and show up as promised

2. If a friend is always late, would you ask him to take you to the airport?

Yes, but make him promise to be on time

Probably not, because you can't count on him

Yes, but don't be home to teach him a lesson

3. Are you considered reliable if you are usually on time, except when your car doesn't start?

You are as reliable as your car

An unreliable car is a good excuse for being late

Yes, because you had good intentions

I have asked you to look both as the giver of reliability to others and also to look to see who you trust.

So I have taken this reliability down to its basics for you here so that you can understand what reliability is in its most basic form. I don't want any confusion.

Here is another definition of reliability:

“(systemic def.) is the ability of a system to perform and maintain its functions in routine circumstances, as well as hostile or unexpected circumstances.

In natural language it may also denote persons who act efficiently in proper moments/circumstances.”

So it means being reliable even when things get mucked up!

An inherent quality of reliability is honesty isn't it!

If you say you will be there at two, you are there at two, right? And you are consistent.

I am afraid that reliability is no longer being taught to our young people.

They are taught that it is fashionable to be late or even worse that their time line is not meaningful to anyone but their own selves. They cannot trust each other because they have thrown reliability out the window with the bath water, as my Mom would say!

It is self-respect, a way to increase your own self-respect by being reliable.

Certainly the advertising media has taught us that there is no truth in advertising and no trust.

There is a difference between respect and trust. You can respect someone but not trust them.

I have not had the problem of being so dependable that I was taken for granted. I have more often seen people amazed that I do show up on time every time.

I have more often seen people awed by my doing what I say I will do.

They just don't encounter this in their own lives, hardly ever.

I bet you rarely see it in others as well.

So what an honor it is to show people what trust is and what being reliable means by being consistently reliable yourself!

That is why others need to see it in us as teachers.  
What a great example you can be.  
What a great thing to teach by example!  
And you develop your own self esteem.  
You feel good about yourself because you are being reliable!

No matter how you look at it, parents are lying to their kids.  
Usually because that is what they learned and that is the way they grew up.  
I don't think it takes strength to walk in truth.  
I think it takes strength to look in the mirror and see what you are really doing.  
I think walking in truth is being your authentic self and that is easier than any other kind  
of walking in your fullness.

Nothing given by Creator is hard. Man makes things hard.  
Reliability is a virtue, a positive character trait.  
It should be part of your authenticity, it makes you authentic to be reliable doesn't it?

Being reliable or not is a free will choice you make, isn't it!

There was a woman who was very trustworthy. She assumed that everyone was  
trustworthy. She wanted everyone to be trustworthy. And she could not see why people  
were not reaching for trustworthiness in their own lives.  
She wanted to teach trustworthiness so she practiced it and practiced it and showed it to  
everyone around her. But they rejected what she was teaching and she got upset and  
frustrated. She knew that Trust was valuable and gave her a good sense of self esteem  
and she wanted this for everyone. But by trying to make everyone trustworthy what was  
she doing?  
She was violated other people's free will choice wasn't she!  
An even bigger mistake!  
So she had to understand that it is each persons free will choice to be trustworthy or not;  
to let them choose for themselves. She could continue to be an example for those who  
wished to learn trustworthiness but not to make other people trustworthy against their  
free will choice. How could they be trustworthy against their will?

“It is what you do that defines you!” Fourth Shamanic Truth.

If what you do is trustworthy, reliable, consistent, accountable, truthful, and you practice  
follow through, then that is what defines you.  
That is your character, your authentic self.  
That is who you are.

Speaking your truth is a choice you make.  
It builds self esteem and makes you trustworthy  
Speaking your truth is also a component of compassion.

We are not used to speaking our truth; most people do not, as we have learned.

I find people are attracted to me because I speak my truth, I don't feel any isolation because of it. People regard my speaking my truth as a breath of fresh air in a lying world! People are attracted to other people who speak their truth with compassion.

The only approval that counts is your own, of yourself.

People seek approval because they are not sure their own beliefs are true beliefs, or because they have beliefs that do not benefit them and they want confirmation to continue believing in those non benefiting beliefs.

They look for others to tell them to continue believing in those non-benefiting beliefs or others who also believe those non-benefiting beliefs. They look for outside confirmation.

The wife beater goes down to the bar to hang around with other wife beaters for confirmation that what he is doing is ok.

That is why we talk about beliefs in the course I teach at <http://www.shamanelder.com/>, getting your own beliefs all benefiting you so you can speak your truth.

If you don't know what you believe, what truth can you speak?

And do you have to believe what other people believe?

Who knows you better than you?

We are all unique.

No one out there knows what you believe better than you do!

So when you know what you truly believe and you work to make all your beliefs benefit you today, then you have some truth to speak yes?

And if you find out that one of your beliefs no longer benefits you, choose to change it, it is a choice you make, very easy.

We speak the truth as we know it in this moment, but we can stay open to changing our beliefs if at any time they do not benefit us.

# Truthfulness

I wanted to talk about the next point in Trust which is truthfulness, but before we begin I want to remind you that we are learning what trust is not so much to make you work on being trustworthy, that is your choice, but more to point out to you ways to know who you can trust.

When we trust the wrong people we get hurt don't we!

I think it is important to trust the right people.

Not everybody is trustworthy.

If we assume that, we do get hurt.

It is OK for people to be whoever they are, but I want to know what trust is so I can choose carefully.

There are five parts to Trust.

Accountability

Reliability

Consistency

Truthfulness

Follow through

Here we will discuss truthfulness.

Here is a quote:

"The main engagement of the writer is towards truthfulness; therefore he must keep his mind and his judgment free." - Gabrielle Roy

Wow! What does having a free mind and no judgment have to do with Truth?

Truth is in perception and unless we are clear, we can't tell.

And when we judge we are putting our own belief system on someone else's head, aren't we!

Your truth is not necessarily for everyone is it?

There is an old story about a group of blind monks who were taken to see an elephant for the first time. One by one, each blind monk went up to the elephant. The first one touched its back and said and exclaimed, "Oh it is a wall!" The second blind monk touched its trunk and said, "It a strong pillar!" The third blind monk touched its tail and exclaimed, "It's a rope!" Each monk assumed that the part he touched was the whole thing. Their knowledge of the elephant remained defective, partial understanding, imperfect. And this is true whenever we gather only a little information about anything. To really know something is to experience it fully.

Another quote I like:

“Truthfulness is the firmest road leading to God, and the truthful are fortunate travelers upon it. Truthfulness is the spirit and essence of action and the true standard of straightforwardness in thought; the spirit and essence of action.”

It is pretty hard to move forward in action if you are not truthful, isn't it!  
And if someone can speak their truth, they pretty much have their heads screwed on straight, don't they!

“ A loyal, truthful one changes states at least forty times a day (in order to preserve personal integrity), while a hypocrite remains the same for forty years without feeling any trouble or unease (over his or her deviation).”

“Truthfulness elevates ordinary people to extraordinary heights, and is a key that opens the door to realms and realities beyond visible existence. One borne aloft by truthfulness cannot be detained from journeying upward, and doors are not closed in the face of one who uses this key.”

The Shaman knows this and uses this key always.

What is truthfulness?

Feelings, thoughts, words and actions that do not contradict each other.

Why is it important to be truthful?

To gain trust, mostly for ourselves; no self deception; free to be you and me, but lets do it honestly!

If we cant trust ourselves, others will not either.

This is true!

Why do people lie?

Because they believe their truth will not be accepted by others.

Fear of what people will think.

Fear of change.

What else might someone be afraid of and thus lie?

non-acceptance

fear of confrontation

fear of getting caught in a lie, that perpetuates a bigger lie.

Whose acceptance do you need so badly that you are willing to lie for this?

Who is such an authority figure in one's life?

Is it necessary to have people hold sway over you to the point of lying to gain acceptance?

No one has ultimate authority over individual free will choice.

Parents love you more for speaking your truth than for lying to gain their acceptance,  
don't they?  
And it seems to me that if you must lie to your employer to keep your job, maybe it's not  
the job for you, eh?  
If you must lie through thought, word or action to be accepted by a religious community,  
well, I don't want to belong!  
We are indeed taught to lie!  
And yes, people lie because it is easier than telling the truth, for sure!  
But is it being true to you?

I want you to be authentic to you within or without the conventions of the age.  
And you can!

What problems do you encounter when you are not truthful?

You need to keep track of whom you lied to and what you said.  
It ties us up, doesn't it.  
Its hard to have meaningful relationships.  
It puts a lump in the chest...makes you doubt yourself.  
It lowers self-esteem.  
You are just not being authentic to you, either.  
It blocks the path to the future.  
The energy shuts down.  
And why would we want to lower our self-esteem to be accepted by others?  
It's a big mistake.

I am back to what authority is. Is it worthwhile to lie to just to be accepted?  
The only authority I want to be accepted by is Creator and I don't have to lie to get that.  
Outside of that, I will not lie to myself, the other authority figure in my life.

Why do we lie just to be accepted?  
People think it will boost their ego.

Why do we fear not being accepted by outside authority figures or groups or religious  
groups?  
Conformity is impossible as we are each unique.

Why do we want to be just like everyone else?  
Everyone else out there is not surviving any better than you are!  
There is no safety in numbers here.

How do you feel when people have been untruthful with you?  
Angry, actually  
betrayed.  
sad

hurt  
resentful

And how do you feel when you have been untruthful with yourself?

diminished

sad

ashamed

depressed

You actually feel the same as if someone lied to you, don't you?

So is it one of those, do as I say not as I do, things?

Why is it not OK for someone to lie to you but it is OK for you to lie to someone else?

It's not Ok.

We are back to self-esteem and authenticity aren't we!

What is a half-truth?

withholding part of the information

making a lie sound like it is not a lie, but it still is

it is a lie that has a thin line of reality

How about saying something nice when you don't mean it?

Or not telling the truth because it might offend someone?

This is back to lying to gain acceptance isn't it?

Now I will say that telling the truth should be done with compassion and without harm.

A quote:

“A mind that is subject to desire and anger will not give rise to words that bespeak affection and cause well-being. Truthful words that create good are the product of a mind free from desire and anger.”

So here we see how to tell the truth.

There should be no ulterior motives in your truth.

Emotions color your truth, don't they?

Sarcasm, for example.

How you speak your truth is important too isn't it.

a snide remark?

talking behind someone's back?

getting people to do what you want by your words

These are half-truths, aren't they, which are technically also lies.

Using your truth to make people do something.

Like the little child that is afraid to sleep in the darkened room, so you tell him there is a boogey man under the bed and he stays in his bed too afraid to get up.

Is this good?

When you are happy with what you have, whatever that is, you don't need to manipulate and when you are happy living in each day fully; you don't need an agenda.

The practice of truthfulness has two things that we should keep in mind: first, it is a "practice." One has to practice it consistently; it is a continuing effort which one strives to practice every day.

The second thing, the meaning of the word "truth" does not have only the limited meaning we normally associate with it--not saying straight-out lies. In the Indian philosophy of Yoga, truth also means the concept that the "Self"--the soul--is One, all-pervading, ever lasting, ever pure, ever free. The 'Self' in me is the same one as the 'Self' in you. Knowing this, that all beings are essentially one, that everything is interconnected, it then becomes easier for us to see where the practice of truthfulness and non-hurting comes from.

If you practice truthfulness for some time, you will see the effects of this practice. You will notice how this becomes the 'practice of non-hurting' any other sentient beings (not just people). And this 'non-hurting' again is operative on the three levels of thought, speech, and actions. It is quite amazing.

“You must accept yourself as you are, instead of as you would like to be, which means giving up self-deception and wishful thinking. As long as you regard yourself or any part of your experience as "the dream come true," then you are involved in self-deception. If we really want to learn and see the experience of truth, we have to be where we are.”  
(from Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism, by Chogyam Trungpa).

Self-deception! How many people live in self-deception?  
Living in the past or living in the future is self-deception isn't it?  
It seems to me the only way to not be deceiving yourself, is to live in the now.

We could never know the whole or absolute truth about anything, but we can be truthful in telling what we do know and understand.

The standard test for right conduct including truthfulness is harmlessness

Being true in your endeavors will help you gain others' trust and enhance your success.  
Whenever there is a task, you must put your heart into it.

"A wicked person is born of jealousy. Out of selfishness and anger he complains about unfairness towards himself. A benevolent person always has a heart of compassion. With no discontent or hatred, he takes hardship as joy. An enlightened being has no attachments at all. He quietly observes the everyday people blinded by delusion."

Is truthfulness a responsibility?  
A responsibility to who?  
To Creator and ourselves and our guides.

To ourselves first.

All of us.

So what you are saying is, if you consider yourself responsible then you are truthful.

Do you hold others to a similar, or higher, standard of honesty than you practice?

And why do we hold others to a higher standard of honesty than we hold ourselves?

Why is it ok for us to lie but not for President Bush to lie?

Do you know that it is only you that judges you?

Why is it so hard to be honest with yourself, if you are the judge and jury anyway?

You have forgiven tons of people in your lifetime; can you not forgive yourself a bit?

Who makes this life so hard anyway?

To be honest, I bet you can see many qualities and gifts and talents you have.

I bet you can see that you are a pretty darn good person!

It doesn't matter what others think.

It matters what you honestly think of yourself.

It doesn't matter if you are accepted by others, if you can accept yourself fully.

Kind of linked together, aren't they?

So why not look at yourself honestly and see all the wonderful bits and parts of you!

Sure we are human; sure we make mistakes and have foibles; that makes the colors on the quilt of humanity.

How boring if we were all perfect!

Accept your foibles as part of your human nature and just do your impeccable best.

Creator doesn't create anything flawed.

You are exactly as Creator intended you!

He wanted you to be human with foibles!

So, accept your foibles; know what they are and do your best to keep them under control.

I have not met anyone without foibles.

Foibles are flaws, imperfections, quirky habits, etc. Creator does not look upon you and see only your flaws; Creator sees your entire self and loves you very much just as you are. Why not start to love yourself in the same way? And love others no matter what their foibles are too! This will allow you to be honest with yourself and with others. But it is a practice; baby steps. It is the easy way!

Shamans are pretty good at finding the easy way!

That is one of the beauties of studying shamanism.

It is not complicated because it is not man made.

Man complicates everything!

Creator's things are easy!

I bet that most people find it hard to look at themselves honestly.

So how can they tell their truth when they don't even know what it is?

And I think that is part of the problem, why there are so few people you can trust out there.

# Accountability

Anyone remember the five parts of trust?

Reliability

Honesty

Consistency

Accountability

Follow through

"It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable."

Moiler

In essence, self-accountability is the cornerstone of a moral and responsible way of living. It is about who we are as people in our own paths of life as well as what we do when no one's is watching. When we have a well-developed sense of self-accountability, we are honest with ourselves, answerable and fully responsible for what we say and do at all times. We need to have the ability to look beyond the immediate moment to consider all the consequences and know if we are willing to accept them. If a person is not known to live this way then maybe they should not deserve your trust.

Accountability is an age-old truth that says you are answerable for your actions - and inactions. If something happens or something goes wrong, it's you who must take responsibility. There's a small difference between "it's not finished" and "I haven't finished it." The willingness to be accountable for what you do and what you fail or refuse to do is a benchmark of trustworthiness.

Unaccountable people are good at making excuses, blaming others, putting things off, doing only the minimum, acting confused and pretending to be helpless. They say they are helpless or not aware while hiding behind walls of their own making, computers, paperwork, and other people. They say things like I didn't know; I wasn't there; I don't have time; it's not my job; that's just the way I am; nobody told me. Unaccountable people are quick to complain or blame others and slow to act. Perhaps you can think of examples of this. And perhaps you can see that this unaccountability is a benchmark of untrustworthiness.

This is called using diversionary tactics: an action, excuse, or belief a person hides behind that justifies his or her behavior and performance. Diversionary tactics provide a person with the "out" so they do not have to be accountable for their performance, responsibilities, goals or the situations they put themselves in. How many times have you been frustrated by these flimsy excuses for not doing or saying what needed to be done or said?

How accountable are you? Does it depend on the situation or are you always ready to accept responsibility for your decisions and behaviors? On a scale of 1-10, with 1

representing "Never" and 10 representing "Always," rank yourself on each of these characteristics of accountability. They apply equally well to professional and personal situations.

- 1: If I don't understand something, I seek out information.
- 2: I own my own problems and circumstances.
- 3: When I make a mistake, I admit it.
- 4: I am proactive, often taking the initiative.
- 5: I ask for the things I need to do my job.
- 6: I analyze my activities and ask, "How is this contributing to organizational objectives?" I analyze my activities and ask, "What more can I do?"
- 7: I stand and deliver when it's time to report on my actions.
- 8: I welcome feedback.
- 9: I model accountability for the people I work with and supervise.
- 10: I readily confront unaccountable behavior in others.

Obviously, the higher the score, the better you did. Take a second look at items on which you ranked yourself at the low end of the scale. What can you do to become more accountable in those areas? Just answer to yourself.

Being accountable is one of the fastest ways to earn respect, trust, and promotions. More importantly, it puts you in control of your life. Responding accountably to life's challenges gives you the power to change things. That's the biggest benefit of all.

Life is full of choices. Being responsible means being in charge of our choices and, thus, our lives. It means being accountable for what we do and who we are. It also means recognizing that our actions matter and we are morally on the hook for the consequences. We are in control of our own lives.

This is very important. An accountable person is not a victim and doesn't shift blame or claim credit for the work of others. He considers the likely consequences of his behavior and associations. He recognizes his own hand in the triumph of evil when nothing is done to stop it. He leads by example. Are you a victim? Is the person you are considering to trust in, showing himself or herself as a victim?

Do you know what you are accountable for?

Make a list of those things you have trusted yourself to do or someone else is trusting in you to do. What do you want to be accountable for this week?

I want to speak more personally about accountability for a minute here. Again please don't take these solely as personal criticisms or get down on yourself about it but also remember that we are looking at this to determine who we can trust as well.

But I want to bring accountability down home to where we live here so you can understand it.

You know that there are activities or tasks that you may be more comfortable doing (such as cleaning your office, doing paperwork, responding to e-mails, helping other people,) but which don't significantly move you forward. Instead, they keep you stuck in maintenance mode, allowing you to do just enough to stay afloat.

Then, you may have conversations with yourself that sound like, "That's okay, I was busy today. I'll do that tomorrow." Or, "I just wasn't able to find the time to get to that thing I said I would do today." And wouldn't you know it, something else always seems to come up! I don't suppose this has ever happened to you.

This busy work will disguise the truth, creating the illusion that you're working hard, simply because you feel busy. These diversionary tactics enable you to do everything else but the activities that would dramatically accelerate your success.

If you, "Can't seem to "find the time," for these activities, I have yet to stumble across time that I just happen to "find." It becomes a never-ending search, an exercise in futility. Consider that these things you have decided or agreed to do but that you may be avoiding must become as habitual as waking up in the morning, taking a shower, brushing your teeth, and breathing. These are the activities you do, (hopefully) without a second thought.

Lets take a look at some psychological diversionary tactics most people use.

Fear of failure or Success: "I'm afraid of failure yet I won't take the steps to ensure my success at anything. Therefore, if I sit back and do nothing, then I can never fail at anything!"

Ever know anyone like this?

Perfectionism: "Either I become the perfect Shaman practitioner or I don't practice at all. There's no middle ground here. Therefore, I can't practice Shamanism just yet because my practice isn't perfect! Once I create the perfect system, then I will begin to practice." (And when will that be?)

Doing Everything Yourself: "I can't allow others to do these tasks that they may be able to do because they will never do it as good as I can. Therefore, it's just easier if I do it myself. That's why I never have enough time to walk my path." (Great, now you can become an expert in busywork or the activities that aren't the best use of your time or skills, rather than the activities that are going to help you grow and progress in your own life.)

Been There, Done That: "The last time I studied a healing path it was a waste of time. Therefore, I know that studying this healing path won't work for me. (Did you ever consider that it was more about your approach to that healing path that wasn't effective? If you change your approach, you change your results, so be careful about learning the wrong lesson.)

Here's another diversionary tactic. "I'm so busy that I don't have the time to create my routine!" You allow your schedule to hold you accountable for doing what you need to do to create the results and the lifestyle you want. Your routine is where your day starts and where it ends. After all, life works a whole lot easier when you do what you say you are going to do.

Either you are going to run your day, or other people and circumstances are going to run you. Honor the commitments you make to others as well as the commitments you make to yourself.

**Diversionary Tactics:** Do you become easily diverted or distracted by situations, new tasks or people rather than focus on your goals and initial objective? If so, you probably have a long list of tasks that never gets completed, because you feel that you're always being pulled in a different direction. (And who's responsible for that?) You may also be habituated to overload and love the rush associated with working on overdrive when trying to do it all.

**Victim hood:** Do you allow one bad experience to snowball and affect the rest of your day? Rather than moving on and forging ahead, this allows you to go into a negative tailspin and destroy the chance of doing anything else productive for the remainder of your day, or your life.

While you may find that one or two (or more) of these behaviors describe some of your diversionary tactics, this is actually good news! Hey, I never said that you would actually like bringing this truth to the surface. After all, it takes a lot of courage to admit our foibles. However, now that you have a greater understanding and awareness about them you can do something about it.

When you notice yourself falling into these traps, you can make the choice to either continue in your diversionary tactic or make a better choice that will bring the results you really want.

So I think that now we have a better understanding of what accountability really means and we can see that when people ask us to trust them who also exhibit these diversionary tactics, we might want to think a little harder about trusting them.

There are so many people in this world who are trying to get you to trust them. Can you name a few who we might not want to give our trust to and the quality of trust that they are lacking?

“An ethical leader is not only willing to be accountable, but desires to be held accountable and responsible for results.”

You know, the most interesting part is that you choose what you wish to be accountable for!

It is your choices that you are accountable for and you are free to make your own choices.

You are not accountable for the guy next door and you choose what you wish to be accountable for.

It might help to make a list of what you choose to be accountable for.

It might help to make a list of what you wish to accomplish in your life and put a timeline on those things.

How can someone be accountable to others if they are not accountable to themselves?

At the end of the day, I take stock of what I have accomplished in that one day.

You are not accountable to other people's expectations, only your own expectations.

But if you say you will do something for someone then you chose to be accountable to them for that thing.

Your own expectations for you should not be difficult. Why make your life so hard?

Aha! Now we know why our lives seem so very hard! We set too high expectations for ourselves!

Each day I set expectations for that one day. At the end of the day I see what I have accomplished. If I have a set back, oh well, I start again tomorrow. It is just one day! It has been said that having too many expectations is the way to cause yourself the worst emotional problems.

Healing for me is a continual act or ceremony that I am doing all the time. It is a part of my life like breathing. Breathing is healing if done with that intent. Not only do I pat myself on the back, which by the way is something we should all do more,

I also know that Creator is also patting me on the back! It feels great!

I receive Creator's appreciation for being reliable and consistent and accountable and truthful and having follow through. I give myself appreciation for a job well done as well.

There is an old saying that goes, "If you are constantly being disappointed, just lower your expectations." I find that is really true. We disappoint ourselves and keep ourselves in a rut of failure by choosing impossible expectations for ourselves. Why not take it easy on ourselves! What does Creator expect of you?

So accountability is really a way for you to clean house and accept responsibility for what you choose to be accountable for. You make the list, not anyone else. You decide how hard your life is going to be tomorrow! And when you meet someone using diversionary tactics or playing the victim or setting up so many expectations that it is impossible to fulfill them all, maybe this someone who is not able to be trusted. They cannot trust themselves. Should you trust them?

## Follow Through

Now we are going to talk about the last part of trust. Do you remember the five parts of trust?

Truthfulness

Accountability

Reliability

Consistency

Follow through

And if someone exhibits all five of these traits can you trust that person? These five traits are probably a good indication that the person can be trusted. Has anyone taught you this so easily and clearly before? And is it not good to know who to trust and who not to?

These five traits would be exhibited consistently as consistency is one of the traits right? So what is follow-through?

Accountability is different from follow-through. You can fail to follow through and be accountable for your failure right? What are some other words that mean follow through?

I like to think of my golf swing and how important the follow through is there. The ball won't go anywhere if I stop swinging where the ball sits, right? How about closing, completion, mop up, closing the deal, making good on your choice or promise or the obligation you took upon yourself. We have to mop up what we say we will do right? How can you trust someone who says they will do something and then never does? So follow through on your own choices is really important, isn't it!

To be trustworthy, a person must follow through in word and action and to be trustworthy to yourself you have to mop up what you choose to commit to. What does it cost you when you do not follow through on your own choices or commitments to yourself or others?

Self esteem

Integrity

No one is meant to be perfect but we can be impeccable which means to do our very best.

Let me share with you what another woman wrote to me about follow through.

“This really made me think about all the things I’ve said I would or wanted to do. There’s always a low-level feeling of guilt about them, so I made a list of everything I could remember, and that I looked at it carefully to see whether I’d overcommitted. Since I “don’t work outside the home” (as the saying goes) I think I have unlimited time so when someone asks me to help with something I say yes. Not just because I don’t like saying no—maybe not even because I don’t like saying no. For me, it’s more a matter of liking to help, to be needed, to be counted on for my skills and knowledge. So I keep taking on

new things without considering how it would affect things I've already committed to. But no more! From now on, I'm going to think carefully about the choices I make." - SH

Notice what her real motivations for her commitments are. What does she state is her real reason for promising more than she can follow through on?

To be appreciated perhaps.

To be trusted actually but who can trust her when she cannot follow through.

She over commits.

She has created a vicious circle here.

A lot of people have ulterior motives for committing to things. It is important to know why you commit to something: for praise, for self-esteem, to be "big", to be important, to gain admiration, to be applauded, to be looked up to.

And not being able to say no!

What is the ulterior motive for someone to agree to do something for you? What are they getting out of that favor? Are they giving freely or is this really barter, a trade and you don't know what the deal they are making is? This is another trap we fall into when we trust someone who is not trustworthy. Ever happen to you? Someone says "Oh sure! I would be happy to do that for you!" And then down the road they are demanding that you repay them in some way, that you give them something in return for what you thought was a gift, a favor. Seems like a betrayal doesn't it. But in truth it was a barter from the beginning. You just didn't know it.

People who pretend to give freely and are actually bartering are not being truthful are they! So to protect yourself it is OK to ask straight out, "Is this a gift or a barter." You want to know if it is barter and decide for yourself what you will trade and if it is worth trading for. There is nothing wrong with asking right out whether they are bartering or giving freely. And a trustworthy person will tell you the truth. There is nothing wrong with a barter unless the other party is not aware that it is in truth a barter. Then, it is stealing.

Do you know people who always put off the hard tasks? Or who let unpleasant tasks pile up? Or who make more promises than they can keep? There is no follow through there is there? Are these the people you feel comfortable trusting? Do you see how follow through is a part of trust?

Some of the personal consequences of not following through are loss of health, lack of self respect, just giving up, never starting anything because one knows it will not get done. What a shame to not go for it because of one's own failure to follow through. So how do we foster follow-through? Humility, awareness, self-respect, commitment to oneself, integrity, how about having more good intentions in the first place?

A good intention means that you value that intention enough to invest in it and follow through on it right? How about really knowing why you are doing something and not losing sight of the reasons for doing it, would that be good? Sometimes we forget why we said we would do something don't we! Especially when it gets a bit difficult.

But if you know the reasons you chose to do something you will more likely see it through to completion right? So here is where awareness comes in; being aware of the thing and its path and what it will take before you ever commit to it.

Many people make a good start but get distracted or just give up, and never get where they wanted to go. Some really never intended to put in the necessary work, others may just need to adopt the mantra: "Slow and steady wins the race".

If you have lapses, don't waste any energy at all beating yourself up for them. Put them behind you and tell yourself that only one thing matters: not giving up. No matter how badly you may have performed recently, as long as you start again, you have not given up and all is well.

Finally, enjoy yourself! Accomplishing big things is hard work, but it is also exciting and fun. Allow yourself to have a relaxed attitude. Be confident that you are doing what you should; things are working as they should, and that your results are coming. Make good choices about what you commit your time and effort to.

Life is always changing, and your goals change along the way as well; since you will always be going somewhere, you need to be able to enjoy the trip. This will keep you from burning out along the way, and perhaps even more importantly, when you succeed, it will make your successes meaningful.

I want to share something from the Boy Scouts of America manual that we can all take to heart:

"Often, we hear people asking someone to 'Step Up' to a challenge that needs to be done. Stepping Up means that you have accepted the responsibility, not of Starting that job, but of Finishing it. Before you stepped up, you were in a comfortable position, no stress, no effort being put out - kind of like just standing here. You could stand here for an hour easily. You aren't getting anywhere, but it's easy. Once you 'Step Up' to a challenge, it is no longer comfortable. Others now expect you to perform. You have work to do and it may be difficult. It's like Stepping Up onto this chair.

(step one foot onto the chair seat, keeping only the toes of the other foot on the floor)  
This is a difficult position. It isn't comfortable. I haven't accomplished anything and I can't stay here long. I have to do something. So, I 'Follow Through' - I complete all the work required for the task and I do what I said I would do.

(stand with both feet on the chair)

Now, I'm comfortable again. I could stand here forever with no effort.

If I never Step Up to a challenge, then I never grow.

If I Step Up to a challenge, but do not Follow Through, nothing gets done and I let down everyone that counted on me.

When I Step Up and Follow Through, then I succeed, I grow, and others know they can count on me.“

They can count on you; they can trust you.

What a beautiful thing to put in the Boy Scout manual, eh? How important for all of us to understand follow-through and its relationship to trustworthiness.

I have given you this five part teaching on trust because we don't know who we can trust anymore; because we get hurt trusting the wrong people; because Creator wants you to see this and know who you can trust and who not to; whether it is choosing a teacher or giving your money to someone, trust is so important.

No one wants to see you getting hurt by not knowing what trust really is. There is easy learning as we have here or there is hard learning like getting burnt. I try to give you easy learning here. So I hope you will remember the five facets of trust and use them as a measuring stick when dealing with people. If you can apply them to your own life, so much the better but that is not the point of this e-book.

We want you to be aware of who is trustworthy and who is not. We want to protect you. If someone is not consistent or accountable, if someone does not follow through or speak the truth, let the flags go up in your mind from what you have learned in this e-book.

If someone is not reliable, let your ears prick up and the goose bumps rise up on your skin so that you become aware of what is going on. We walk in power and we don't need to create pits to fall into. Awareness, knowledge, can be gained in an easy way to avoid falling into pits if you choose to take the wisdom. Creator always prefers to teach us the easy way and the true authentic Shaman is completely trustworthy. These five tenets are the backbone of a true shaman. If a Shaman is not trustworthy then that shaman has no self-esteem and no personal power. And if that Shaman has no personal power then that Shaman has nothing you want!

We can take power over ourselves, walk deliberately, in light and love in every way. There is no power if you don't respect yourself. If you are trusting untrustworthy people you are going to get hurt!

Trust is not even something to expect from others, it is something to find in some people. Look for it, but don't expect it. You will only disappoint yourself.

I am always thrilled to meet someone genuinely trustworthy! It is rare! I always give thanks to Creator for that rare occurrence! And I value those people highly. They are few and far between today. And you attract trustworthy people by being trustworthy yourself.

We do tend to trust too freely, to trust the wrong people. So now we don't have to get burned by other people so much. We still respect them, we still respect their free will choice to be untrustworthy but we have our eyes open now. We have a torch with which

to walk in our lives that helps us be safer and more peaceful, this is what is given you in this e-book. We have also learned where self-respect comes from, how to empower ourselves, how to stand more fully in our power by being accountable and truthful and consistent and reliable and following through.

The way of the Shaman.

As we stand in our power we become more powerful healers. We are able to do more energetically in union with Creator. Becoming trustworthy is a spiritual practice for sure! Everyone should be working on some type of personal spiritual healing all the time. Becoming trustworthy is one of these personal spiritual healing practices .It would be good for all of us to be healed from any kind of victim hood. When you know you are trustworthy then that is very good healing for yourself but it takes daily practice.

Who can you trust if you cannot trust yourself? Who should you trust? Yourself! Implicitly! And you can heal the world by being trustworthy. What a breath of fresh air you become to the world! People will flock to you because they can trust you!

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