



Healthy marriages.
Functional families.



Help! I Don't Trust My Spouse

Tools For Rebuilding Trust In Your Marriage



Help! I Don't Trust My Spouse: Rebuilding Trust In Your Marriage

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Part 1:

Tools For The Spouse Who Broke Trust

Tool 1: _____

- a. Trust can be broken in any number of ways.
- b. When trust has been broken, you lose “trust points,” and must restart with a lower score.
- c. Your trust score is affected by the severity & frequency of the offense.
- d. The temptation is to be untruthful to cover other untruths or one’s self, or to prevent more pain.
- e. Truth allows a foundation to be built, and opens the door to healing.
- f. Let your spouse lead how much information you share (who, what, where, when, why, and how). Some details may be too graphic, and cause more pain.
- g. When giving the truth, do it in love. (Ephesians 4:15)
- h. Speak and live the truth. (1 John 3:18)
- i. Replace lying with truth - you and your mate are one. (Ephesians 4:25)

Notes

Tool 2: _____

Notes

- a. Repentance is often confused with confession & apologizing, but they're all different. Repentance is to have a change of heart ... to do a 180° turn.
- b. [2 Corinthians 7:9-11](#)
- c. Godly sorrow leads to repentance, which results in salvation (deliverance from sin) without shame. (v 10)
- d. Human sorrow leads to death. (v 10)
- e. Godly sorrow produces ...
 - i. an intense desire (speed) to clear oneself (speak up about the truth)
 - ii. an apology - know your mate's apology language
 - iii. indignation (displeasure for the wrong)
 - iv. a longing to do right, and zeal to carry it out
 - v. a sense of justice; wanting to do right by all affected
- f. Repentance is focused on the future, and what changes will be made to show its genuineness.

Tool 3: _____

Notes

- a. Understanding lies at the heart of rebuilding trust.
- b. As the offender, you **MUST** seek to understand: 1) why your actions impacted your spouse the way they did, and 2) how it made your spouse feel.
- c. Another word for this is empathy, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
- d. Just as you want your spouse to understand why you may have done what you did, you need to try to understand how your spouse feels.
- e. Do **NOT** analyze, minimize, make light of, nor try to “solve” your mate’s pain. This can deepen the wedge between you and your mate.
- f. You also want to avoid forcing your mate to talk. Give your spouse grace & space to talk when he/she is ready.
- g. **Related Resource:** [The Art of Listening](#)

Tool 4: _____

Notes

- a. A standard is an ideal you stand for ... what you value ... what matters to you.
- b. Having standards is critical to restoring trust because they demonstrate to your mate (and you) that you are actively seeking to make the marriage better by identifying the ways you will/ can be held accountable by your mate and others.
- c. Potential standards should deal directly with the area(s) where trust was broken.
- d. E.g., letting your spouse know where you're going, and when you're returning / showing receipts for purchases or transactions / installing internet filters or accountability software on your computer or mobile device
- e. The big idea is that you clearly mark the line by which your fruit can be judged.
- f. While your mate should give you space and grace to be trusted, you should fill in the gap by taking the lead on how and why you should be trusted.



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Part 2:

Tools For The Spouse Who Was Hurt

Tool 1: _____

Notes

- a. Truce: A state of peace agreed to between opponents so they can discuss peace terms.
- b. The word truce comes from an Old English term meaning “faith” or “assurance of faith.”
- c. When you offer a truce, you’re inviting your spouse to the negotiation table to figure out how to move forward (recall repentance is future-focused ... so is a truce).
- d. Although your mate can call for a truce after breaking trust, it’s more powerful when YOU call for a truce. This shows that you are signaling for reconciliation based on your desires and not pressure.
- e. The human tendency is to run when wrong has been done. Calling for a truce extends the olive branch.
- f. Important: Calling for a truce does not mean your spouse was right or that you are no longer hurting. Instead, it shows that you’re acting in faith, leaning on God to heal & defend you.

Tool 2: _____

Notes

- a. Recall is another term for forgive (see [Luke 17:1-4 \(AMP\)](#)).
- b. If your spouse repents (tool #2 for him/her to rebuild trust), you are to forgive.
- c. Forgiveness is the following:
 - i. Releasing your mate from YOUR mental prison. This is for your benefit so that the situation will not control you any longer (although you may still be mad & hurting).
 - ii. Refusing to reciprocate. Vengeance belongs to God, not to you. When you pay your mate back for what he/she has done, you've taken God's place.
 - iii. Having standards & boundaries. Just because you forgive doesn't mean your mate was right or can walk over you. Set standards for yourself, and boundaries for your mate.
 - iv. You forgive your mate the way God forgave you: through Christ. (Ephesians 4:32)
- d. **Related Resources:** [Figuring Out Forgiveness](#), [The Love Bundle](#)

Tool 3: _____

Notes

- a. Just as understanding is at the heart of rebuilding trust for the spouse who broke it, unity is at the heart of restoring trust for the spouse who was hurt.
- b. The first illustration of unity in the Bible was with Adam and Eve. They were naked (vulnerable emotionally & physically naked) and unashamed with what they offered or received.
- c. When you and your mate are united, there is a blessing (prosperity, advancement, a treaty of peace) (see [Psalm 133](#)).
- d. It can be difficult to imagine being on the same team with someone who has hurt you. Of course, it's made easier when your mate is using his/her tools to rebuilding trust.
- e. In the case where your mate has broken trust and is *not* using the trust building tools, you have a decision to make about how you should proceed according to your vows, and God's will. This decision should be made prayerfully, with godly counsel, and with a loving heart.

Tool 4: _____

- a. A person who has broken trust, and is serious about restoring it, craves space and the opportunity to prove his/her repentance.
- b. On the other hand, a spouse who has been hurt [understandably] feels compelled to check-up on the spouse 24/7, and know every detail about every interaction, transaction, and obligation.
- c. Here are two strategies regarding giving your mate space to show repentance:
 - i. Monitor your questions
 - i. Ask questions to build, not harm
 - ii. Ask, not accuse
 - iii. Remember your spouse is an adult, not your child
 - ii. Honor your mate's right to privacy
 - i. For your own mental health
 - ii. To build trust in your mate
- d. Playing Sherlock Holmes will *not* build trust in your marriage!

Notes

Tool 5: _____

- a. Use the rebuilding time to get healed, and make any changes that are required of you. This may require going to a pastor, therapist, coach, or other licensed therapist.
- b. During the trust rebuilding time, you will have an opportunity to become bitter. If you dwell in the past instead of moving forward, you will stay stuck.
- c. Know that it may take time for your spouse to develop into the spouse you both want to see. It will be unfair to expect your spouse to be that person immediately. Just as it takes time for you to develop and learn, so it will for your spouse as well.
- d. View time as a refinery for yourself and your mate. Let God refine you, and make you stronger just as he does the same for your mate.
- e. **Related Resource:** [Marriage Works!](#)
[Coaching](#)

Notes

Answer Key

Part 1

1. Truth
2. Repentance
3. Understanding
4. Standards
5. Time

Part 2

1. Truce
2. Recall
3. Unity
4. Space
5. Time

Notes
