Elements for Building Trust, Gift of Trust

Elements of trust

Building trust has at least three main elements:

- **Vulnerability** - before people can trust each other, they have to open up to each other. This requires the courage to make oneself vulnerable to others.

- **Conflict -** an exchange of ideas in a vulnerable environment will no doubt, at times, lead to conflict. The best choice is not to always try to avoid conflict. Rather, there is the need to improve the ability to manage conflicts in a productive way.

- **Ambiguity -** no two people are likely to see all things the same way. What is clear to one can be completely confusing to another. In order to work in a trusting relationship with others, there is the need to have a high tolerance for ambiguity.

The Concept of a Gift of Trust

The phrase "to earn our trust" is often spoken. This is an understandable idea and at first glance seems most appropriate. Yet today's fast-paced world often brings people together for brief amounts of time to consider and reach significant decisions. There is little time to earn each other's trust in the classical sense.

In some tribal societies, it isn't unusual for complete strangers to walk into villages and be immediately treated as a friend. The villagers trust the stranger as if they knew him already. By giving over this Gift of Trust, the villagers are assessing the stranger by his/her reaction: does the visitor treasure the gift or abuse it? There isn't time for the villagers to measure the good or bad of a person before deciding whether or not to welcome them into their communities so intuitively they offer the stranger a Gift of Trust and wait to see whether or not the visitor abuses it and the stranger's reaction will provide the villagers with their answer.

You may also find it helpful to read:

Trust, Turf, Co-Creation and Collective Impact by Liz Weaver, Tamarack Institute – a paper created for Tamarack's Community Change Institute in Vancouver, BC. September 25-29, 2017
http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/turf-trust-co-creation-collective-impact

Gracious Space – Holding the dynamics of collective leadership and community change. December 2009.
http://www.ethicalleadership.org/uploads/2/6/2/6/26265761/gracious_space_holding_the_dynamics_of_collective_leadership_and_community_change.pdf