

Steps to Re-building Trust: 25 Do's & 25 Don'ts

By Marty Miller, LPC

25 DO'S:

1. **Behavior & actions rebuild trust.** Words & promises don't.
2. **Actions** that rebuild trust are:
 - a. Attend church.
 - b. Attend meetings (treatment, 12-step & support).
 - c. Attend counseling.
 - d. Work the workbook / 12 steps.
 - e. Engage in treatment of your own volition.
 - f. Not dropping out of treatment.
 - g. Admitting that you have a problem.
 - h. Showing gratitude that spouse is willing to work things out.
 - i. Honesty.
 - j. Be accountable.
 - k. Developing a plan for recovery.
 - l. Admit when you have been selfish.
 - m. Respect spouses boundaries.
3. Re-building assumes there was some trust there to begin with. If there wasn't, then that is where you must start.
4. Accept that the responsibility for re-building trust is on your shoulders. She can't do it; she cannot manufacture trust.
5. Be humble, willing to submit. Whatever she needs to rebuild trust you are willing to do it without fussing or getting angry.
6. Contain anger when she needs to process.
7. Find an accountability partner.
8. *You* put a filter on the computer, or do what is needed to put guards in place for yourself. Don't expect her to do it.
9. Set specific times to process. Otherwise she will think you are never going to talk about it.
10. Expect that she will need to process it about twice as much as you may have thought, or more. This is because:
 - a. She is from Venus. God made her that way
 - b. She has been hurt / betrayed, it is going to take a long time to heal.
11. Understand that *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus* (by John Gray). Get the book on CD. She heals by processing and reprocessing to purge insecurities & fears brought about by your acting out. She is incapable of "just forgetting about it."
12. Mar-Venus will also help you to understand her emotions. There are many great gender differences we need to understand, otherwise her behavior and emotions will make no sense.
13. Empathy, empathy, empathy. She must know that you understand how hurt she is, and how this hurt has caused a number of other emotions (fear, insecurity, shame, guilt, embarrassment, anger, anxiety, depression and so on).
14. Be genuinely remorseful for the hurt you have caused.

15. Tell her you're sorry. Write a letter with the help of your counselor.
16. Time plus nothing equals unhealed wounds. [Jer. 1.6 *You can't heal a wound by saying it's not there.*] For her woundedness to begin healing, it will require you getting in treatment and staying in recovery *the rest of your life.*
17. Be pro-active by anticipating what she will need to start trusting you again.
18. Have faith. Know that God is going to help you with this, and that He can even find ways to use it for good.
19. Trust God to give you the power to make progress in recovery.
20. Spend quality time with her.
21. Spend quality time with your kids.
22. Take care of your health; exercise, eat right, etc.
23. Learn your triggers and make a plan to cope.
24. Be aware of HAALT.
25. See "*TRUE RECOVERY VS. NOT SO MUCH.*"

25 DON'TS:

1. Don't resent when she needs you to be accountable.
2. Go to counseling just for her. Go to get help for yourself.
3. Expect her to plan your counseling or recovery.
4. Get angry when she has a question.
5. Get angry when she needs to process.
6. Get angry if she finds out you haven't told her everything.
7. Get angry because she doesn't trust you.
8. Get angry because she is angry.
9. Expect her to want to have sex right away.
10. Get angry because it is taking her a long time to feel comfortable trusting you enough to be sexual.
11. Put yourself in high risk situations.
12. Be overly friendly with other women.
13. Blame her for your addictive or compulsive behaviors.
14. Minimize, deny, rationalize or manipulate.
15. Overgeneralize by using words like "always" & "never."
16. Expect her to be your accountability partner.
17. Stop coming to counseling just because things seem to be going better.
18. Compare her to other women.
19. Compare yourself to others who have done worse.
20. Play the victim. There is help.
21. Act remorseful if you're not.
22. Leave out information about your acting out, hoping she won't find out later but knowing she probably will.
23. Make her feel crazy by denying reality to avoid taking responsibility.
24. Minimize her hurt & pain.
25. *Don't ever give up.* There is hope! Other men have found recovery, so can you.