

Collaborative Growth's Team Model Builds Trust

-- Marcia Hughes and James Terrell

Invest in a strong foundation for your team and you gain big results – trust, identity, loyalty and better decisions. And it doesn't stop there. These results lead to sustainable productivity and emotional and social well-being for the team and its individuals. That's the stuff of a healthy and vibrant organization! That spells Wealth! And it's the heart of the Collaborative Growth Model which develops team ESE (emotional and social effectiveness).

Trust is the glue that holds teams together. A team's ESI is inextricably linked to the behavior that builds relationships. Creating strong bonds gives teams the emotional capital to persevere under duress and to face tough challenges that require flexible and creative problem solving. A trusting environment promotes risk, outside-the-box ideas and innovation. Trust is developed as a consequence of team attitude, acting with integrity and a willingness to be vulnerable.

Robert Hurley, professor of management at Fordham University, wrote an article for the Harvard Business Review titled "*The Decision to Trust.*" He created a ten point functional list to evaluate a team's level of trust. The first three components are based on the individual's personality – risk tolerance and level of adjustment - and how much power he or she holds. The remaining seven are environmental conditions: communication, predictability, integrity, benevolent concern and alignment of interests. Several can be tracked directly to using the seven ESE skills which form the Collaborative Growth model.

Trust works best when it is modeled by the team leader. Peter Drucker, the well known management guru, emphasizes that effective leaders emphasize the team, and it shows up in their language. Those leaders use the words "we" or "our team" much more often than "I." They think in terms of "we" and "team." not "me." Effective leaders are quick to accept personal responsibility for problems, but they share credit with the whole team. Consistently using this behavior builds trust. When the leader's behaviors are trustworthy, it becomes contagious. Team members are much more likely to trust one another. And that's the stuff of high performance teams.