Becoming A Trustworthy Leader

Psychology and Practice

Book Summary

Trust in leaders in a variety of organizations is at an all-time low. We need strong leaders in today's society to address our economic and societal problems. In order to solve these problems, we need to build and rebuild trust. Research has shown that leaders are critical to building trust in organizations and 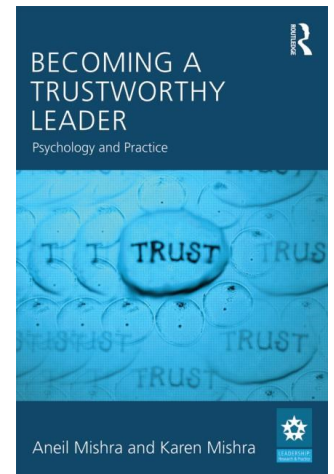this trust is positively related to making lasting change and innovations within the organization. This book is based on research of multiple organizations and examines how leaders have successfully built trust with their employees, colleagues, and teams by demonstrating the four dimensions of the ROCC of Trust: reliability, openness, competence and compassion.

"To strengthen society and its major foundations, we need to build and rebuild trust"

About the authors

Dr. Aneil K. Mishra is managing partner of Total Trust Coaching & consulting in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. He is the coauthor of *Trust is Everything: Becoming the Leader Others Will Follow*. Aneil has been a business school professor at Penn State University, Wake Forest University, and Duke University. Aneil mentors leaders and teams, helping them to build trust in order to improve organizational performance. Aneil is a graduate of Princeton University and earned his PhD from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. (Mishra & Mishra, 2013, p. xiii)

Dr. Karen E. Mishra is a business school professor in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. She has been a business school professor at Michigan State University, Wake Forest University, and Penn State University. She conducts research on how leaders build trust and engagement through internal communication. She is coauthor of *Trust is Everything: Become the Leader Others Will Follow*. She is also an executive coach, helping leaders build trust with their teams. She earned her MBA from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business and her PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (Mishra & Mishra, 2013, p. xiii)
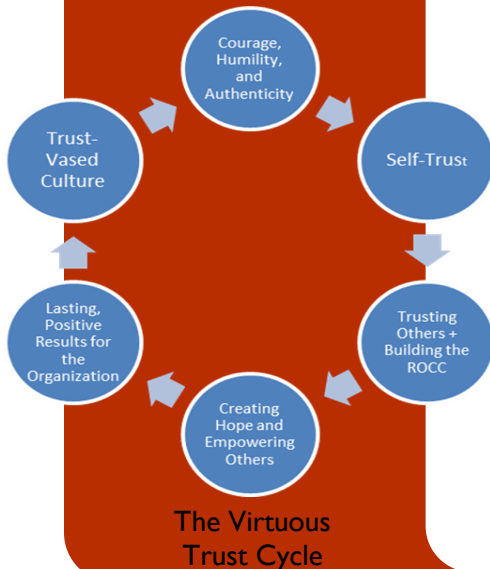
Chapter 1—Trust is Needed Now More Than Ever

"Get this — their President 'cannot tell a lie,' and they think they're ready for self-government!"

"Interpersonal trust is one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is Reliable, Open, Competent, and Compassionate" (p. 6).

Trust in institutions including government and business, is at an all time low. Although it is not easy to build and rebuild trust, extensive research has shown that leaders from a variety of circumstances have done this. 30 years ago in the midst of an automotive industry crisis, organizations that had established trust with key stakeholders responded differently than those that had not established such trust.

In 2012, the Edelman Global Trust Barometer indicated that American's trust in business had only improved by 50%. In a 2011 survey,

the Gallup Poll of Trust in Government found that 81% of those polled had little or no trust in the U.S. government to do what is right. We also distrust our leaders and each other as individuals. A survey by the Center for Work Life Policy found that between June 2007 and December 2008, the percentage of employees who profess loyalty to their employers plunged to 39% from 95%. Clearly, there is a serious trust deficit.

Why has trust declined?

◆ We have become more suspicious over time.

◆ We have witnessed failures in the financial system, public education, government disaster responses and the political system.

◆ Organizations have failed us through dishonesty and inappropriate action(Lockheed bribery scandals, Red Cross HIV-testing failures).

◆ Organizational downsizing.

◆ Financial mortgage fraud and failures.

◆ Leaders have violated our trust (Hewlett-packard's Mark Hurd, Senator John Ensign, Catholic Bishop of Augsburg).

The ROCC of Trust

The ROCC of Trust is based on the extent to which one person believes that another is reliable, open, competent, and compassionate. These four dimensions of a person's trustworthiness contribute to the willingness of others to be vulnerable to that person.

Reliable - they can be counted on to do what they say they will do.

Openness– being honest and transparent

Competent– able to perform the job.

Compassion– not taking

advantage of another person and demonstrating a genuine interest in the needs of others.

Leaders who demonstrate the ROCC of Trust to their followers and who are able to work with trustworthy people, create lasting, positive change in their organizations.

Leaders are critical in the process of building trust in organizations. Leaders who are trusted by their followers, effect change more easily and more quickly.

The ROCC of Trust
Four Dimensions of Trustworthiness

The Virtuous Trust Cycle
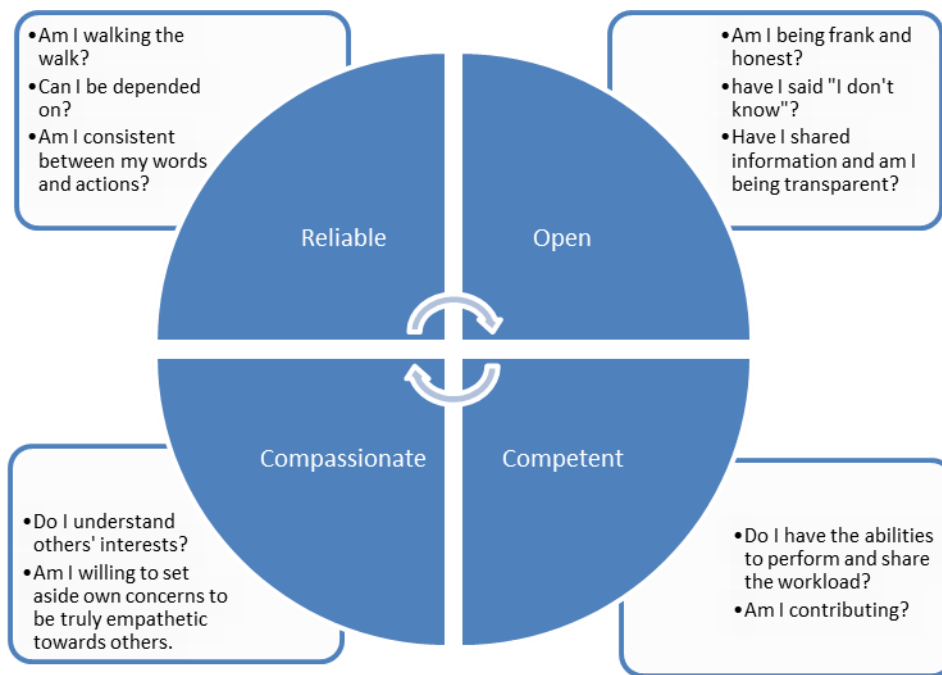
Chapter 2— What Trust Is and Why it Matters

Mishra and Mishra (2013) defined trust as a willingness to be vulnerable to others in the face of uncertainty. Even though there are no guarantees that everything will turn out fine, with trust, you are more willing to become interdependent. There are many benefits from building trust such as more loyal relationships, stronger resiliency in the face of a crisis, and enhanced individual, team and organizational performance. The four basic aspects to building trust are reliability, openness, competence, and compassion, or the ROCC of Trust. The ROCC of Trust does not mean embracing blind faith. Blind faith means that the individual has no doubts that there will only be positive results. When a leader exhibits the ROCC of Trust, he or she can be depended on when things go well and when they don't go well. When a person embodies all 4 elements of trustworthiness, we have the ROCC of Trust in another person.. Some pieces of ROCC are more important in certain contexts. For example competence and compassion are qualities we care about more in physicians than we would in our dry cleaners.

"The bottom line is that the presence of trust is more beneficial than its absence. Great results can happen when leaders are trustworthy and followers emulate that example" (p. 27).

ROCC of TRUST

- Am I walking the walk?
- Can I be depended on?
- Am I consistent between my words and actions?

Reliable

- Am I being frank and honest?
- have I said "I don't know"?
- Have I shared information and am I being transparent?

Open

- Do I understand others' interests?
- Am I willing to set aside own concerns to be truly empathetic towards others.

Compassionate

- Do I have the abilities to perform and share the workload?
- Am I contributing?

Competent

Benefits of Trust

- Positively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
- Negatively related to intention to quit.
- Employees are less likely to report they are physically or mentally unwell.
- Enables greater collaboration.
- Directly impacts success of business.

Mishra and Mishra (2013) provide many examples of people and businesses that have grown and prospered as a direct result of their efforts to build trust. These include Bob Lintz, GM plant manager, Ted Castle, Rhino Foods, Two Men and a Truck moving company and Kevin Lobdell, MD.

Chapter 3— Leaders Are Born *and* Made

Mishra and Mishra (2013) assert that leaders are both born and made. Each person has a unique composition of talents, motivations and dreams that can be used to get the best out of people around them. If people are truly motivated, they can use background experiences, observations and repeated practice to become a leader. Empirical research provides the argument that both nature and nurture are involved in developing leaders. A study using the Minnesota Twin Registry, found that 30% of the leadership behaviours can be attributed to genetic factors, while the remaining 70% resulted from environmental factors. Based on their research, Mishra and Mishra (2013) believed that great leaders have learned to build trust because of innate qualities and also because of their experiences. Leaders are critical to developing trust in an organization. When leaders are trusted, they are more easily able to effect change that is lasting and productive.

"...Although some individuals are naturally more inclined to become leaders based on early life experiences and even genetics, all people have the capacity to become leaders if they first have the desire and second make the effort" (p. 29).

3 Levels of Change: Personal, Interpersonal, and Systemic

Mishra and Mishra (2013) recognized that to achieve positive results in organizations, they needed to address three levels of change in their trust-building efforts.

1. **Personal Level**— The personal level includes attitudes, values and behaviours that individuals demonstrate capacity for influencing others.

2. **Interpersonal Level**— The interpersonal level includes attitudes, values, and behaviours that individual demonstrate toward one another.

3. **Systemic Level**— Systemic level involves organization-wide forces that enhance or impede organizational change for example organizational culture.

Mishra and Mishra (2013) found three characteristics among leaders who demonstrated the ROCC of Trust: courage, humility and authenticity.

Courage allows leaders to be vulnerable to others. Leaders with courage will be more likely to admit mistakes by building trust with others.

Humility fosters the leader's followers to be vulnerable to each other. Humble leaders are aware of limitations and discuss them freely. Humble leaders are more likely to build trust because they are open to feedback.

Authentic leaders live the values that he or she espouses. If a leader's values are consistent with the ROCC of Trust, his or her authenticity is able to promote building trust.

Building Trust According to Your Own Strengths

Mishra and Mishra (2013) believed that leaders should focus on their own strengths when building the ROCC of Trust. Leaders can become more humble in this process because they must also recognize their weaknesses. Leaders can identify strengths using tools such as the Reflected Best-Self Exercise or Strengthsfinder 2.0. Developing competency in all four dimensions of the ROCC of Trust requires leaders to begin with the areas that are strengths. Trust will be established as the leader works on improving the weaker dimensions.

"When I grow up, I'm gonna be a leader. Wanna follow me?"

Chapter 4— Developing Your Own Trust Network

Leading others can be challenging and lonely. When leaders implement change, they undoubtedly face resistance to the change. Creating a group of trustworthy people who will support you in your initiatives is crucial in implementing change. According to Mishra and Mishra (2013), this group of trustworthy people who can help you is called the Trust Network.

The people in your Trust Network can support your efforts through advice, encouragement, and help. Your Trust Network feel positive about you which in turn means they will more likely trust you. Mishra and Mishra (2013) postulated that your trust network "must trust you, be trustworthy themselves, and be motivated to help your change efforts and your leadership journey" (p. 48). Your Trust Network can be the shoulder to lean on or a motivating factor to keep you on track. If members of your Trust Network are outside of your organization, they may provide valuable and different insights into your colleagues. The number of individuals in your Trust Network should be manageable and chosen carefully. Your Trust Network can also help you gain resources that will facilitate the change you want to implement.

Trust Tips

1. Keep in touch regularly with people who are important to you.
2. Be willing to share your concerns and opinions with those in your Trust Network.
3. Learn about your friend's issues so you can help them when they need you.
4. Support friends when they need you most.

"As you lead others using the ROCC of Trust, it is very important to develop a Trust Network, essentially a "merry band of brothers and sisters" (p. 48).

Creating Your Own Trust Network

- Gather people from different backgrounds and capabilities.
- Start building your Trust Network with friends who have demonstrated the ROCC of Trust and who have shown they can reciprocate the help.
- Look for people outside your regular place of work. For example use social networks such as LinkedIn.
- Your Trust Network

has the potential to improve leadership as trustworthy individuals help one another become more trustworthy.

To determine if your Trust Network is working, consider whether you can call on members when you are making an important decision. Also, consider if members would help you when you need to change jobs or careers.

"The time to begin building your Trust Network is now" (p. 55).

Chapter 5— Building Trust Within Teams

It is extremely important to learn how to work in teams as we spend most of our lives in teams. Work teams are individuals who depend on one another and share the responsibility for specific outcomes in their organization. Teams are important for protection, to build identity and to reduce the vulnerability to a challenging environment. If teams operate properly, they can have a positive financial impact on the organization. However, when people work together, conflict will inevitably arise. Trust is at the core of a well functioning team.

Building the ROCC of Trust begins with the team leader. Mishra and Mishra (2013) stated that "trust begins with the team's leaders, and team leaders can influence team performance through team trust" (p. 58). Leaders can influence many aspects of the team and provide the group with vision and goals. When team members trust each other and their leader, it helps to minimize and overcome conflict. The preferred way of building this trust to by having conversations. Sharing information among team members encourages them to get to know one another which in turn develops trust.

"One key approach for building trust within teams is for team members to learn how to listen actively to one another" (p. 63).

Coaching and Accountability

The leader as a coach plays an important role in identifying and solving problems. The leader as a coach helps individuals determine their strengths so they can rely on one another and perform at their best. The leader-coach can be an objective person in determining if someone on the team needs to be more accountable.

Nothing undermines a team's productivity faster than a team member who can't or won't address his or her weaknesses. An individual's behavior within a team can be detrimental to team trust. When members can trust each other, task performance, team satisfaction and commitment to the team increases.

Building the ROCC of Trust Within Teams

The leader has an important role in building trust among team members especially if members are new to one another. Mishra and Mishra (2013) stated that trust is important to develop goals, share information, and share power which contribute to the team's performance.

Mishra and Mishra (2013) believed that active listening is an important way to develop trust within teams. Active listening is not easy and requires patience and sensitivity. Active listening allows members to clarify paraphrase and summarize statements in an effort to better understand one another. Active listening builds compassion based trust as members understand one another better and can help each other with emotional issues.

Steps to Build Trust

1. Determine the dimension of the ROCC that works best for you and start there.

2. Help members identify strengths and develop a common ground with one another through active listening.

3. Ask members how they need and want to build trust with one another.

Chapter 6— Making Change Last by Creating a Culture of Trust

Mishra and Mishra (2013) defined organizational trust or a culture of trust as "the degree to which the members of an organization trust the organization as a whole, which includes the processes, norms, rules and reward systems that reinforce the organizations' collective trust" (p.69). Leaders that demonstrate the ROCC of Trust and identify other individuals who can help reinforce the ROCC of Trust create a culture of trust where the organization can sustain a positive culture even in times of crises. A leader that encourages interpersonal relationships in turn strengthens the organizational culture. A culture of trust is also built on a foundation of underlying values, beliefs and principles that everyone believes in.

Trust Tips

Reliability - live by a set of commitments such as an open-door policy.

Openness– share information that will help your employees do their job better.

Competency - help employees find ways to do their jobs better.

Compassion– truly listen to employee's concerns about their job and their life so they feel respected as human beings.

"When employees feel as though they are appreciated for the strengths they can offer, they feel empowered to do their best for the organization" *(p. 72).*

Ways Collective Trust is Developed and Sustained

Personal Level

- Establish trust through actions (set an example).
- Demonstrate compassion, forgiveness and gratitude.

Interpersonal Level

- Identify and select individuals to help build ROCC of Trust.
- Create positive networks
- Develop employees' strengths.

Systemic Level

- Develop and implement organization-wide information, measurement and rewards that reinforce ROCC of Trust.
- Open communication.
- Promote team cohesion
- Help employees understand how their work aligns with the organization's values.

Leaders as Linking Pins

Mishra and Mishra (2013) recognized the important role that middle managers play in developing a culture of trust. Middle managers have "linking-pin" status because they are members of the team they manage and are also members of the teams their bosses manage. Middle managers are in a position to link one team to another. Sometimes leaders at the top of the organization are unable to interact with employees. The middle manager becomes crucial in developing a culture of trust for the organization by sharing organizational information, and displaying and living the goals of the organization. The type of relationship an employee has with his or her immediate supervisor could have an effect on the employee's overall trust in the organization. Mishra and Mishra (2013) use Bob Lintz of General Motors to examine ways he created a culture of trust to improve the company.

Chapter 7— Trust and Innovation

Mishra and Mishra (2013) define innovation as the ability to implement new ideas. The authors believed that to enhance innovation, leaders must be willing to share more information, and create opportunities for greater collaboration of human, material and financial resources. Leaders must also develop ways to empower employees and foster individual and collective creativity to make work more fulfilling. These goals can only be achieved if a culture of trust exists. Trust must be present for employees to share ideas, information and to engage in problem-solving especially in times of crisis. If employees have freedom to try new ideas and learn new things, they are going to feel more fulfilled and want to stick around.

Trust Tips

Reliability– share details to get things done.

Openness– encourage new ideas.

Competence– take on a new challenge.

Compassion– don't punish one-time mistakes that lead to learning.

"Trust also appears to enhance the development of new skills, knowledge, and expertise that are necessary for innovation" (p. 88).

How Leaders Foster Innovation Through ROCC of Trust

1. Emphasize the importance of developing new products, services or processes through words and actions.
2. Foster interpersonal trust among teams promoting risk-taking and collaboration.
3. Reinforce organizations' culture that promotes innovation.

Personal Level

Leaders reflect on where they are most creative and see things others cannot see.

Interpersonal Level

Leaders find trustworthy individuals to collaborate with and share resources.

Systemic Level

Organizational culture must foster an individual's creativity.

GLASBERGEN

"I want you to find a bold and innovative way to do everything exactly the same way it's been done for 25 years."

"Not everything comes from the top down. Some of the greatest ideas have come from the bottom up"
     - Sheldon Yellen, CEO of Belfor Holdings

Chapter 8— Trust Across Borders

I like the people I work with. Someday I'll meet them in person.

[Virtual teams get things done.]

The workplace is becoming increasingly global as employees are interacting across organizational boundaries and geographic borders. The world is becoming increasingly competitive requiring organizations to adopt best practices regardless of physical locations.

Virtual Team— members of a team working together but are based in different places.

Leadership becomes very important to trust within virtual teams because:
- Distance causes trust to develop more slowly.
- Nonverbal communication cues are absent.
- Group members don't exchange feedback as quickly.
- Cultural and Geographic barriers are present.

Rules for Building Trust
1. Get started on tasks quickly.
2. Acknowledge that messages have been read.
3. Be explicit when communicating.
4. Set deadlines and stick to them.
5. Begin with a face-to-face meeting

"Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and others only enhance free agency. Importantly, trust is the essence of this new way of working" (p. 104).

Trust Across Organizations and National Borders

The ROCC of Trust exists at the interorganizational level:

Openness— between customers and suppliers.

Competency— competency based trust reduces the need for inspections in the auto industry.

Compassion— not behaving selfishly increased trust which positively related to increased profits.

As the number of multinational companies increases, trust across national borders will need to be addressed.

- An individual's propensity to trust varies across countries.
- Try to listen and understand the cultures you work and live in.

Trust Tips

Reliability— Set clear expectations, goals, and objectives for how members should work.

Openness— Develop common language terms and references so members can communicate openly.

Competence— Change leadership of the members to take advantage of all talents.

Compassion— Make sure everyone agrees as to how rewards should be shared and stick to the formula.
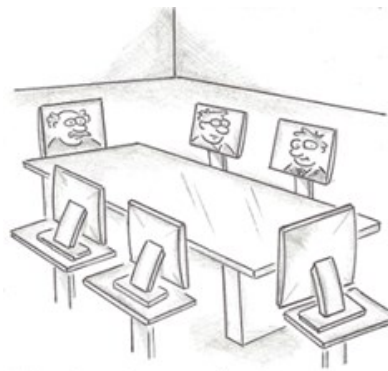
"Now that I have you all in the same room."

Discussion Questions
1. Has social media increased trust or distrust in the work environment?
2. In our schools, how can we use the ROCC of Trust when interacting with families from different cultures?

Chapter 9— Trust and Healthcare

Trust in healthcare is important to the ROCC of Trust because:

- Healthcare represents a large portion of the economy.
- Vulnerability is at the core of trust; we are most vulnerable when we are sick.

- Healthcare is a complex context.
- Healthcare faces many challenges such as rising costs and shortage of physicians.

If the trust in the doctor-patient relationship erodes, patient care and well-being will also be affected.

Trust Tips

1. **Reliability**– actions are consistent with best evidence-based medical practices.
2. **Openness**– Listen to patients.
3. **Competence**– Act like a professional.
4. **Compassion**– Show patients and staff you truly care about others.

"Healthcare leaders must not only build trust among their colleagues, but must also build trust with their patients" (p. 121).

Challenges and Benefits of Building Trust in Healthcare

Challenges

- Role insurance companies play.
- Less time to talk and listen to patients.
- Electronic medical record documentation have reduced physician-patient contact time.
- Conflicting messages that patients receive from other physicians.
- Patients who become self-proclaimed experts through internet searching.

Benefits

- Increased patient satisfaction and loyalty.
- Healing depends on patients willing to work with healthcare personnel.
- Trusting patients visit physicians more which increases the likelihood they are willing to improve their health.

Building Trust at the Personal, Interpersonal and Systemic Level

Personal

- Courage, humility and authenticity are essential for healthcare leaders to build trust.
- Healthcare personnel need to be servant leaders.

Interpersonal

- Patients demand reliability (waiting room times).
- Physicians need to be seen as competent by patients and other staff.
- Must be open, honest and respect patient's views.
- Above all must convey compassion.

Systemic

- Involve others in decision making, create effective teams, communicate openly, and eliminate policies that don't promote trust.

"This is a common procedure. So to keep things interesting, I'm going to attempt it blindfolded."

Chapter 10— Rebuilding Trust

- Rebuilding trust takes time.
  - Requires both parties to want to repair the relationship.
  - Share with other party when trust has been violated.
  - Trust violator must acknowledge what happened.
- Apologize quickly and mean it.
- Behaviour of trust violator should be consistent with apology.

Rebuilding Trust depends on:

- Whether the violation was deliberate.
- How severe the violation was.
- If the violation happened repeatedly.
- How important the relationship is to the victim.

Trust Tips

1. **Reliability**– follow through on your commitments.
2. **Openness**– admit when you've made a mistake.
3. **Competency**– fix your mistakes
4. **Compassion**– forgive others when they make mistakes and

"...rebuilding trust is a two-way street. If you want to repair trust with another party, they must be willing to meet you halfway" (p. 144).

Chapter 11— Making Trust Last by Enlarging Your Purpose

- Find a cause that is larger than you.
- Give back to the community to show you care.
- Regardless of the successes, remember where you started.
- Help new leaders emerge to sustain the trust even after you leave the organization.

Trust Tips

1. **Reliability**– show others you are there for them.
2. **Openness**– be open about your successes and failures.
3. **Competency**– follow through and help others.
4. **Compassion**– find a purpose larger than yourself and commit to it.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you use your skills to help a group of people tomorrow?
2. How could you use the ROCC of Trust to rebuild relationships in the school or classroom?

Critique by Colette Hayward

Becoming a Trustworthy Leader (Mishra & Mishra, 2013) is founded in extensive research involving various organizations including restaurants, automotive, healthcare and transportation. The authors provided real-life examples from their own experiences and the lives of other leaders to illustrate how the four dimensions of the ROCC of Trust can be easily implemented to build and rebuild trust.

The book was clear and gave very practical ideas for any type of leader wanting to build trust within any type of organization. Although the authors did not specifically use a school administrator in their examples, it would be easy to apply their trust tips to my own leadership journey. Each chapter concludes with a set of trust tips to help leaders put the findings into action. This book would assist any aspiring leader to learn how to become more trustworthy.

Application to Practice

*Becoming a Trustworthy Leader (*Mishra & Mishra, 2013*)* is extremely helpful in understanding how to create and maintain trusting relationships. Education is all about relationships; teacher-student, student-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-parent, administrator-teacher and central office-teacher/administrator. Building trust in education is necessary and can only strengthen and enhance student achievement.

From a human resource perspective, building trust within the organization has benefits. Staff members would develop a loyalty and perhaps stay not only in the profession but in the school or division longer. Staff would become risk-takers and be encouraged to be innovative in their teaching practices. Employees of the division would be more likely to support and implement decisions from central office in a trusting relationship. The collective bargaining process would have the potential to be resolved in a timely and agreeable fashion.

References

Mishra, A. K., & Mishra, K. E. (2013). *Becoming a trustworthy leader: psychology and practice.* New York, NY: Routledge.