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## A Matter of Trust *By Bill Oliver*

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### A Matter Of Trust

Has your child ever said, "You don't trust me." If they haven't, they will.

The question is should you? The answer is it depends....first, on the circumstances... second, on the child's prior actions.

For example, we would never trust an eight year old to drive a car...or sign a contract...or be a Bank President. There are circumstances and situations that are beyond a young persons' ability. They are not mature enough, physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually, to face the challenges of certain situations. In those cases, it is not a matter of trusting the child. It is a matter of not trusting the environment or circumstances.

There is a second consideration to "Trust". It is called "Trustworthy", a word you don't hear much about anymore. Trust is always earned, never blindly given...at least if you are smart. To be "trusted" one must first become "trustworthy". Trust must be obtained the old fashioned way...it must be earned.

How then does a young person earn Trust?

Imagine an old balance scale, the kind you used to find in pharmacies. The Pharmacist would put the medicine on one side and selected weights on the other. When the sides balanced, the prescription had been filled.

Mentally put the word Trust on your side of the scale. On the child's side, put three words, Dependability, Responsibility, and Accountability. When the scale "balances", Trust has been earned.

To understand this more clearly, let's define some terms. I have found it helpful to break these words down to get at their real meaning.

Depend/ability is the ability to keep your promises...to keep your word...to do what you say you will do. A dependable car is a vehicle that lives up to its promise. Honda is viewed as a depend/able car because it lives up to its promise. Mercedes is also viewed as depend/able car. It makes a slightly different promise than the Honda...more luxury...more prestige. Different cars...different prices...different promises...both depend/able. To be "trusted", a young person must perform as promised. They must keep their word

Response/ability is the ability to respond appropriately. A responsible person chooses what they "need" to do...not necessarily what they "want" to do. In the case of a young person, they may "want" to go to the keg party but they also know that nothing really good is going to happen there. They "need" to stay away. The right response would be to choose their need over their want. A responsible person makes the right choices...the right responses.

Account/ability is the ability to manage your own "account". An accountable person takes ownership of their actions and the corresponding results. They don't blame someone else for their mistakes. The F on the test is theirs not the teacher's.

Dependability, Responsibility, Accountability. Should I trust the child whose behavior fits that pattern? You bet! After all, they've earned it. Consider talking with your child personally about this approach to "Trust". It just might put both of you on the same page.

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