

# GÜDLIFE

## 7 STEPS TO REBUILD TRUST



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## 7 STEPS TO REBUILD TRUST

In my profession, I help couples rebuild trust that is broken. They want to know if the relationship can be restored. I offer them hope that it can, but will take an effort from both.

### BROKEN TRUST IS HEARTBREAKING

Trust is foundational to relationships. Trust establishes security. On this foundation all other elements of the relationship are built.

When trust is broken, it involves a **heartbreaker** and a **brokenhearted** person. The heartbreaker is the person who did something or a series of things to violate trust in the relationship.

The brokenhearted is the person who has had their trust violated. It is emotionally painful for the brokenhearted person. Herein lies the formation of mistrust in the relationship. Depending on the offense, a couple may have a crack, crevice, or crater in the foundation.

Questions quickly emerge.

*Is the foundation ruined?*

*Can we rebuild trust? If so, how?*

The answers to these questions depend on several factors. I will address them by sharing 7 steps to rebuild trust.

### 1. BOTH PARTNERS MUST BE WILLING TO ENGAGE IN THE REBUILDING PROCESS.

In order to rebuild trust, the heartbreaker and brokenhearted have to engage in the process. The heartbreaker has to focus on repairing the wound and demonstrating trustworthiness.

The process of rebuilding trust harder for the brokenhearted. Here's why.

1. The brokenhearted partner has to be open to forgive and move forward.
2. The brokenhearted partner has to risk being hurt again.
3. The brokenhearted partner has to work on letting the heartbreaker in again.

## 2. THE PACE OF REBUILDING IS SET BY THE BROKENHEARTED.

Because the work to rebuild trust is harder for the brokenhearted, the pace has to be set by her/him. The heartbreaker must understand this and adjust accordingly. Think in terms of wound and recovery. A wounded person has a slower pace than a non-wounded partner.

If the heartbreaker sets the pace or pressures the brokenhearted to "get over it", trust cannot be rebuilt. On the other hand, if the brokenhearted uses the process only to repeatedly punish the heartbreaker with anger and vitriol it may stall the process of recovery.

Remember, the aim for both parties is to rebuild trust. Attitude and actions are key.

## 3. THE ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS OF THE HEARTBREAKER MUST BE SINCERE.

If you are the heartbreaker that violated trust in your marriage read carefully. Your attitude and actions must focus on the pain you caused your spouse. You may not like to face it, but face it you must. Until you can empathize with the heartache your spouse has endured, you will not be able to rebuild trust.

Going forward your words and actions must be aligned. They must convey sincere remorse for your actions and a clear intent to rebuild trust in the relationship. Honesty across the board is paramount. This is not a time to think about protecting yourself. It is the brokenhearted spouse who needs to feel protection.

## 4. THE BROKENHEARTED AT SOME POINT HAS TO BEGIN DISPENSING TRUST.

This is hard. Mistrust warns against it. Your head and heart have to work together. Lower your risk by dispensing trust in smaller doses. Dispense it based on the heartbreaker's actions of day to rebuild trust.

Some make the mistake of giving full trust back right away. This may set you up for another heartbreak. Remember, small regular doses works best.

## 5. REBUILDING TRUST REQUIRES A DAILY EFFORT ON BOTH PARTNERS.

Relationships are built on reciprocal patterns. It is a give-and-take process between two people. *"I scratch your back. You scratch mine."*

Rebuilding trust requires a similar process. The heartbreaker has to exhibit trustworthiness behavior on a daily basis. Again, attitude and action must be

aimed at reestablishing security in the relationship. Do not lose sight of your mate's heart. Is it healing? Do you remain empathic?

If you are the brokenhearted spouse/partner, every day you will have to work on being open to the effort of your mate and dispense trust in equal measure. This reciprocal process of demonstrating trustworthy behavior and dispensing trust will cause it to grow over time.

## 6. ISSUES OF FORGIVENESS AND FEAR HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED THROUGHOUT THE REBUILDING PROCESS.

The brokenhearted spouse/partner is in a lot of pain. Broken trust manifests issues of forgiveness and fear. These will be triggered throughout the rebuilding process and will diminish over time based on the quality of repair work done. Until then, the heartbreaker has to be prepared to deal with these matters in a careful manner. A steady diet of showing empathy, restating apology, and offering reassurance will help rebuild trust.

## 7. REBUILDING TRUST IS UNDERSTOOD AS A PROCESS OVER TIME.

A couple needs to adopt a mutual understanding about trust. It is a process that builds over time. In my work with couples, I give them a "mathematical metaphor" that goes like this: **Trust = behavior/time** (*Trust equals behavior over time.*)

Couples must be patient with the process. It takes a lot of work and time to rebuild trust. However, over time the foundation will become stronger and a sense of security will be restored in the relationship. In some cases, couples end up with a deeper level of commitment to each other.

### GAME PLAN FOR THE HEARTBREAKER

If you are currently a heartbreaker in your relationship then it is important to think about how you can rebuild trust with your mate.

Here is a list of things not to do in the rebuilding process. **Check the behaviors you're currently doing that you need to stop.**

- I have minimized or made excuses about my behavior.
- I make promises to change but don't act on them consistently.
- I put pressure on my mate to forgive, forget, and move forward.
- I get mad or complain when my mate doesn't acknowledge my effort to change.
- I get discouraged and feel like quitting when I don't get a positive response.

**Check the attitude and actions you plan to take to rebuild trust.**

- I will work on demonstrating remorse for my actions.
- I will try to show more empathy toward my mate.
- I will adjust to my mate's pace for recovering from broken trust.
- I will try to show some form trustworthy behavior every day.
- I will not give up trying to show my mate I care about rebuilding trust.

**Summarize in one paragraph what you will focus on doing to win the confidence of your mate this week.**

**SUPPORT FOR THE BROKEN-HEARTED**

The rebuilding process is difficult when trust is broken. However, you have to begin somewhere.

**From the list below check two or three things you can begin to work on in response to your mate's effort to rebuild trust.**

- I will work on forgiving my mate.
- I will work on giving my mate an opportunity to repair our relationship.
- I will work on opening up a little in response to my mate's effort.
- I will work on dispensing a little trust when I notice consistent behavior.
- I will work on not being punitive.
- I will work on acknowledging my mate's effort to be caring and sincere.
- I will work on talking about my emotional triggers with my mate.