



traceyezard

*Transforming Teams
into 21st Century Tribes*

What's trust got to do with it?

Excerpt from *Glue*, pp157-162

I am fortunate to work with organisations trying hard to find the right recipe for forward momentum. The brake on momentum often comes down to this: people feel a lack of trust. Even if it is the processes not being quite right, the product not meeting customer needs, or the strategy missing the boat, underneath all that, the thing keeping them in a holding pattern is a lack of trust.

Often it's a lack of trust in the leadership. A feeling of 'us' and 'them'; of hidden agendas and a general unsafe feeling; of not wanting to open our mouths in case it gets used against us; of leaders taking the credit for hard work we've done, or great ideas we've had; of seeing leaders sabotage each other to get ahead. Just as frequently, it's also about a lack of trust in each other.

People have great relationships out of the workplace. For some reason, we've set up in our work environment the idea that when we walk into the front door, we behave differently. Without the right environment and connection, we keep a distance from one another. We lose our authenticity. And when we lose our authenticity, we lose trust. People are distrustful of superficial, artificial relationships. But we've become accustomed to that being the way of the world in the workplace. And it's making us more unhappy and demotivated than ever before.

Lack of trust comes down to people putting more time and focus on tasks than relationships. Trust springs from everyone in the team seeing that part of their role is to create bonds with each other; to step out of self and connect with other people that they work with. That is what elevates teams to real tribes.

The title of this book gives a hint of the difficulty in identifying the intangibles of collaboration, connection and learning, and the strength they bring. Glue, when it brings two or more elements together sets into an invisible force. It is hard to see yet its power is felt. Because it is not a *hard* measure, many of our executives don't want to know about it. And yet without that invisible glue, we fall apart. Fortunately, the latest research shows it does impact hard measures. Throughout this book, research points out the effect of these elements on the bottom line, talent retention and innovation. Exciting research into trust contributes to the case for companies to spend time building trust.

The elements of trust

For glue to work, we need two major forces: one is adhesion, and the other one is cohesion. The way water works is a good way to explain these concepts. Cohesion is when molecules connect to like molecules. Think of rain falling from the sky. Cohesion keeps the particles of water together. When they stick together, they form a droplet.

Adhesion is about sticking to another thing – when one type of molecule connects to another that is different. When the droplets hit our window, and the water connects with the glass, adhesion keeps the raindrops stuck on the window. They fall when they become too heavy for the adhesion to hold.

In this last section of the book, we'll be looking at the three critical elements of glue that will give you the adhesion and cohesion you need to create high trust. Trust that will see you through challenging times and fabulous times. We will look at the adhesive of purpose and the bond of cohesive relationships.

The latest research on the brain shows clearly that when we feel trust, chemicals such as dopamine and oxytocin rise in the different regions of our brain. Oxytocin looks to play a big part of social bonding and empathy. When this neurochemistry in the brain is activated, it seems that the prefrontal cortex works far more effectively. The prefrontal cortex is the executive function of the brain. When we're operating in this part of the brain and in this trusting state, we're able to problem-solve, collaborate, have empathy and think rationally. It's where we access our higher-order thinking. When we are in a fear state, we shut down our thinking and move to a survival mode instead.

Therefore, when we trust, we work better. When we are confident, we're able to dig deep into how to solve the problems that are facing us. When we distrust, on the other hand, we retreat from this part of our brain and are driven far more by the limbic brain, the emotional seat of our brain. Threat and fear rise, and we find it far harder to work to our full potential. Trust is a critical element to enable us to fulfil our potential.

Paul Zak, the founding director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies and the author of, *Trust Factor: The science of creating high- performance companies*, 2017, has done a significant amount of research over decades on the difference between low-trust and high-trust companies. He and his colleagues use neuroscience as a base of this investigation. They have some surprising findings, as reported in *Harvard Business Review*, 'The Neuroscience of Trust', January 2017.

Paul Zak's findings show:

74% less stress

14% less burnout

13% less sick days

76% more engagement

29% more satisfaction with their lives

106% more energy

50% higher productivity in high-trust companies compared to low-trust companies.

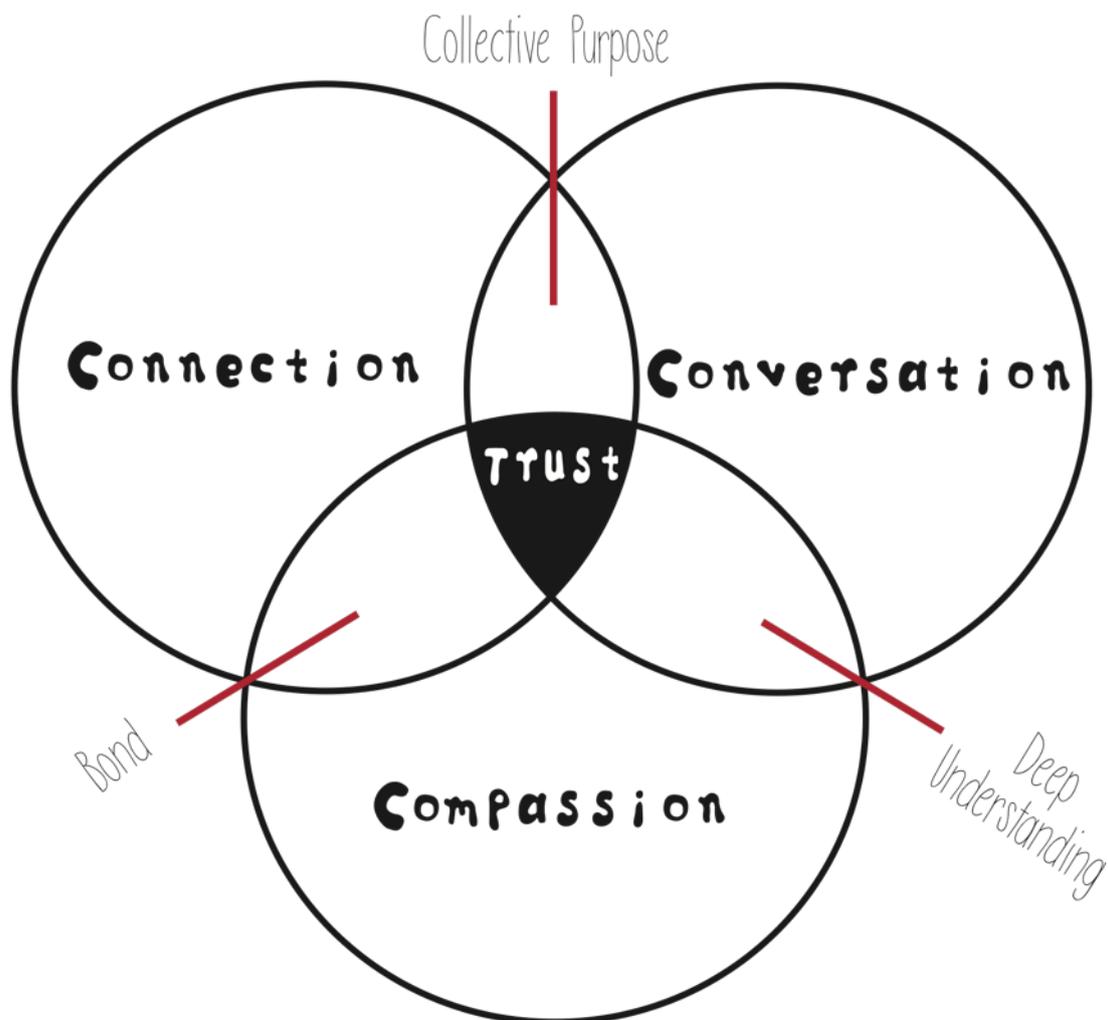
This is a game changer for us. Through neuroscience research, we can see that connection between people, and the trust we build between people, is a critical element of success.

What this science helps us to understand is that here lies our focus. It's no longer any use to look solely to strategy, or task to make change. We must focus on how our people connect, both to what they are doing (their day to day tasks) and to each other.

Finding the keys to trust will help new members come into your tribe and become high-performers fast. It will help you connect with your customers and create loyalty, and increase your market. It will create the environment where you become an employer of choice. The best performing staff are looking for workplaces where there is strong trust because purpose and fulfilment are their driving factors.

The glue of trust

These ideas are so important and so central to my work that I created a model to help you visualise trust, understand the components that make it up, and unlock the secret that creates it. There are three elements in the Glue of Trust model: connection, compassion, conversation.



In this section, we will look deeply at each of these elements, starting with connection.

You deserve to work in an environment of trust. And, when you can bring those three elements together, you will have a bond with your team, a thorough understanding of each other and, most importantly, a sense of shared, collective purpose.

That's what builds trust – and that's what builds 21st-Century Tribes.