

Transcript Interview Roy Lewicki

Voice-Over: Welcome to TrustTalk. Our guest today is Roy Lewicki, the Irving Abramowitz Memorial professor emeritus at Ohio State University. He's a leading scholar in the study of trust development and trust repair, negotiation and conflict management processes. He talks about the motto of the TrustTalk blog, the role of apologies to repair trust and the strong emotional component to trust, where groups that study larger trust dynamics like politics or economics or the law don't often pay enough attention to. He compares transactional trust with identification trust, grounded in the degree we identify with another party having common interests and identities. He speaks about emotionally based quick judgments we make trusting people based on groups or personal connectivity. Trust research in brain science shifted more from the psychological to the biological basis of behaviour. Your host today, Severin de Wit.

Podcast Host: Roy, good to have you at the TrustTalk podcast. You spent much of your academic work researching trust. For a start, what triggered your interest in trust?

Roy Lewicki: I was interested in trust because I have most of my career, I've been teaching negotiation. And negotiation skills and trust kept coming up as a very important element of a good negotiation that is that the parties had to trust each other. So I began to look and see what had been done in the way of research on trust and found that there was very little. As a matter of fact, some of the most important pieces had been done by my doctoral advisor, 20 years previous. So I was and I was invited to contribute to a book in tribute to him, and by his doctoral students. And I and another one of his students decided we would see what we could do that would be to take a look at what had been done in research as well as practice and see if we could improve on that.

Podcast Host: Although your books focus on negotiations, I would like to start today talking about trust repair. Our podcast has a blog website and it says "Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair". How much truth is in that?

Roy Lewicki: Well, like most aphorisms, the statement is true, sometimes. And let me take each of the three elements in that in that little statement and talk about when they're true and not true. Trust takes years to build. Not necessarily. While some trust takes a long time to build,

trust can form quickly in a variety of ways. We trust people because they're dressed in a particular uniform. A policeman, a fireman, a physician, a nurse. So we trust them because we know that they're acting out of a set of role or job requirements that require trust. We let a serviceman in to fix our refrigerator because he's dressed in a uniform and sees and we see his truck outside with the name of the company emblazoned on it. We also build what's called swift trust because we identify significant commonalities with that person. For example, we went to the same high school or we grew up in the same neighbourhood, or we have a relative or a friend in common. So quick trust is possible and it doesn't often doesn't take years to build. Trust takes time to take the second piece. Trust takes second to break. Sometimes we quickly forgive a child for making a mistake, but not an adult who has promised multiple times to follow through on a commitment. Generally, the more severe the consequences of the breach, or the more dramatically the breach calls into question our own judgment about their honesty or integrity and so forth, the quicker it would be likely to break. So sometimes we forgive. Sometimes we don't, depending on who we're dealing with in the circumstances. And trust takes forever to repair, the third piece. That depends on a whole variety of things like number one, how big the cost was or how big the damage was done by breaking the trust. Second, it depends on the willingness of the person who broke the trust to try to make an effort at repair. And third, it depends on the mutual coordination that the parties engage in to restore the broken trust. But not all trust repair actions work because the parties are too injured or they're unable to find ways to trust each other again. So again, the statement is true, each of the components of the statement is true. Some of the time.

Podcast Host: When you search online for books on trust repair, you see titles like Broken Trust, Trust Repair, Is it possible? Rebuilding Trust and Restoring Trust. It appeals to something we all seem to feel is part of our lives, something we have the feel. we lost trust in someone or some lost trust in us. Repairing or making good is also in the human nature, I'm sure. And I think you must have strong ideas about that.

Roy Lewicki: Yes, I do. Whether repairing trust is part of human nature is actually a very complex question. From a rational point of view, that is some sort of processing in our brains. Both the violator and the victim need to decide how much they need the relationship with the other party. If someone violates my trust and I can get my needs met elsewhere, trying to repair trust may be more difficult and than trying to do so then. And it may be easier for me to

switch to someplace else to get my needs met. If someone doesn't show up for an appointment, do I have somebody else I can go to for the particular services. In negotiation we teach about the power of BATNA, that is a "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" And that's an important tool that gives the negotiator power because he can refuse a deal and have his or her needs met by somebody else. So if the parties don't have an easy alternative as a way to get their needs met or they're emotionally connected to each other in a strong way, repairing trust may be critical. That's why trust repair is a critical part of things like marital therapy or community mediation, or business relationships with suppliers and customers where we obviously need their continued employment in the United States today, for example, employees are quitting their jobs at a rapid rate, largely because they don't trust their employers to pay them a living wage for the work they're doing. And this is causing tremendous problems in many economic sectors. So under those situations, an employer would do well to work on trust with employees in order to retain them in times when there are lots of alternatives for the employee to go someplace else.

Podcast Host: In your research into trust repair, you also looked into the role of apologies. What can you tell us about your findings?

Roy Lewicki: Number one, apologies are very important in repairing trust. Second, apologies can be quite complex and there are a number of components to apologize that that would and the more of those components that are present, the more likely the apology is to be successful. I won't go through all six of the components that are necessary. There have been articles and so forth published on my work on that, but I can tell you that some of the more important components of an apology are number one saying I'm sorry, or I recognize that it was, I recognized that something happened. Second, taking responsibility for what has happened, that is, this was my fault, or I'm the one who didn't fulfil my promise or meet our deal. And third, that the apology offers some way to repair the broken trust or the violation that occurred. What can I do to regain your trust? What can I do to make our relationship better? And maybe that's not something I can do right away, but over time I can work to make sure that our relationship is improved.

Podcast Host: Trust repair seems to be the domain of sociology and psychology, but we also often experience trust in other areas like politics or the economy. How come that most research has been the focal point of sociologists and psychologists?

Roy Lewicki: Because trust is fundamentally a psychological process or a human behavior process, and it has two components. It has a what we call a cognitive level, a brain level of sort of determining rationally determining whether the other is trustworthy or whether I should trust them. But it also has a strong emotional component to it. And psychologists essentially are best equipped to look at those elements. So while we normally look at psychologists, normally look at trust in one-on-one relationships or small groups, trust judgments can often carry over to larger entities. The people we work with doing business with certain organizations, trusting politicians who actively, by the way, abuse our trust almost every day.

Podcast Host: Sounds familiar

Roy Lewicki: Absolutely. Or trusting larger social gatherings. We, when we talk about trust at those levels, actual dynamics occur in the way individuals make judgments about the other party and about how and whether they're trustworthy or not. And as I said, there's also a strong emotional component to trust and groups that study larger trust dynamics like politics or economics or the law often don't pay attention to those emotional components. They only talk about the, what I would call, the cognitive components or the thought processes involved, but not recognizing how critical emotion is in the trust and the trust dynamic.

Podcast Host: Trust and distrust can exist in all kinds of relationships. In your article, "Trust, Trust Development and Trust Repair", you distinguish calculus based trust and identification-based trust. What does that learn us?

Roy Lewicki: Calculus-based trust is the kind of is cognitive-based trust is transactional trust. What I mean by that it is the trust of mutual exchanges of payment for goods and services, for honouring a contract, for doing what you say you will do, for selling quality merchandise at a fair price, for keeping a promise or a commitment. Transactional trust is very much an economic transactional element, which is why economists are often very interested in trust. And traditional trust, like this is the glue that holds our economic, political, and community

systems together, and it's often bounded by law or by contracts. So when we see societies or societal dynamics fall apart in certain in a number of ways political groups, racial groups, people's trust in the police, for example, all of that is basically a more cognitive or transactional trust. Identification trust is grounded in a degree that we identify with the other party, that we have common interests, that we have common identities, we belong, we're of the same race, we're of the same gender, we're the same nationality, we grew up in the same neighbourhoods, we had similar attitudes to each other. And this kind of identification occurs more at the emotional level. So we make quick judgments about whether we can trust people based on groups that they're part of or our personal connectivity with them, and much more emotional based and when it's violated, therefore, the emotional damage is much more severe and it's a lot harder to repair that kind of trust.

Podcast Host: Social media is full of broken trust stories in relationships. Often it is about lying or cheating. Is this less of a research object than broken trust in organizations or working relations?

Roy Lewicki: Oh no, it's not less. It's not less of a research subject. Lying and cheating and dishonesty are as much a part of organizational dynamics as they are among the fleeting relationships in social media. So the phenomena are more similar than they are different. It's almost impossible to pick up a well-reputed newspaper like the New York Times or The London Times or some other very well-established newspaper and find several times a week a story about some major trust violation. It's, you know, it's resulted in lawsuits, it's resulted in organizations falling apart, it's resulting in stories of violation and deception and questionable ethical behaviour and fraud and so forth. Broken trust stories make for good gossip. They make for voyeuristic behaviour. They make for good scandal. That's the thing that it's the thing that the news media capitalizes on in order to get you to listen to keep listening for the next three minutes to some story about somebody who did something they shouldn't do. Nobody wants to hear about a relationship that's working well. That doesn't make good news, but a relationship, but relationships have that generated gossip and all kinds of sinister comments and so forth are ones that get our attention. So if you want to study broken trust on Facebook, you can you're not going to learn a lot because there's so much minuscule detail that going on that you'll never really get much insight into it.

Podcast Host: You also published a number of books on negotiations. Earlier in the TrustTalk podcast, I interviewed Bob Bordone and Tim Masselink. Bob said in that interview: "Part of what makes trust useful and trust really helpful in a negotiation is that it is really about future performance, things that we are saying that we will do or will refrain to do from doing and having a sense of belief that the other will follow through on whatever those things are". What is your take on that?

Roy Lewicki: I fully agree with those authors. Trust in negotiation is about a: telling the truth, but not giving away your bargaining position, not using tactics which are intended to emotionally manipulate the other party like lies or dirty tricks or sneaky tactics. And third, about following through and honouring your promises and commitments both on their part and on your part. We can lock up a deal with a handshake or contract monitoring of a variety of other enforcement mechanisms, but ultimately, when it comes down to it, whether you or the other party tell the truth and do what you say you're going to do, that is fundamental to the basis of all good negotiations.

Podcast Host: Roy, you are an emeritus. So does that mean you have a quieter life now or is it only

Roy Lewicki: Let me say I have a different life. I have one that I thought I was going to have more, more control over, but that turns out not necessarily to be true. I taught for a number of years after formal retirement because I love the classroom and really enjoy spending time with students. It gives me some time to do some consulting and continue with my book writing. My wife keeps telling me to slow down, but if I slow down, I'll rot. So I just continue to keep myself engaged in a variety of things until I really no longer able to do them very well. And that's what that's what gets me out of bed in the morning.

Podcast Host: Now let's hope that that will be for a long time. A final question. What challenges do you see in future trust research?

Roy Lewicki: The most interesting trust research, I think, not necessarily a challenge, but the most interesting things are happening is that in what I would call brain sciences. Over the last eight to 10 years, the field of psychology has really shifted from studying biology to the, excuse

me, the psychological basis of behaviour to looking at the biological basis of behaviour. And we now know that, for example, that trust is tied to certain chemicals going on in the brain and certain chemical dynamics that occur when parties interact with each other. This gives us new ways of actually measuring and understanding trust that has nothing to do with filling out a questionnaire or circling little scales, saying how much you trust or distrust another party. I think that's going to be a very exciting work to work that's coming forward on research. In terms of applications, we just have, at least in the U.S. society, we have a tremendous amount of trust repair to do between political divisions, between generations and between our sense of where our society is going and trust, I think people who understand trust-building and trust repair are going to need to play a key part in repairing some of those relationships that the parties can have civil conversations with each other in the future,

Podcast Host: Which means that we still have a lot of stuff to cover in our future podcasts. Thank you very much for being available today. I wish you good health and hope to talk to you in the future.

Roy Lewicki: Thank you. It's my pleasure to be with you.

Voice-Over: We hope you enjoyed this episode of TrustTalk. We would be very grateful if you leave us a review on Apple Podcasts or on Stitcher. Don't miss out on future travels around trust and subscribe to this channel or visit us on our website TrustTalk.co or on Twitter at [TrustTalkCo](https://twitter.com/TrustTalkCo). We look forward to seeing you again.