

# How to develop trust in a new relationship

Terrified your partner is going to cheat on you, or worried that your relationship is doomed? Trust issues can leave you feeling vulnerable and insecure. Here's how to overcome them.

By Rhalou Allerhand 15/03/2019



While the honeymoon period of a new relationship is arguably the best part, for some people this can also be the most challenging. Falling in love is a magical time, but when you don't yet really know someone, entering into a new relationship can also bring up a cluster of insecurities, and trust issues are often the first obstacle that new couples face.

We speak to Relationship Coach and Dating Expert [Kate Mansfield](#) and [We-Vibe's](#) Relationship Expert and psychologist Dr Becky Spelman about how to develop trust and intimacy to give your relationship the best possible chance of success:

## The importance of trust in relationships

Terrified your partner is going to cheat on you, or worried that your relationship is doomed? If you've been cheated on before or if trust was broken for any reason, it can leave you feeling vulnerable and insecure. But while it is normal to feel nervous about a new romance, developing trust is essential for your relationship to succeed.

'Relationships simply cannot flourish without trust,' explains Dr Spelman. 'A relationship that does not have trust can only deteriorate, and many such relationships end. When we decide to open ourselves to another person and to share our lives with them, we also have to trust them.'

'Without trust there is no authentic connection, real intimacy or commitment,' agrees Mansfield.

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## Why do some people struggle with trust?

Contrary to popular opinion, it's not just previous relationship woes that can affect your ability to trust a new partner. While being cheated on in the past will undoubtedly leave you feeling vulnerable, early childhood experiences can also play an important role in how you view those close to you.

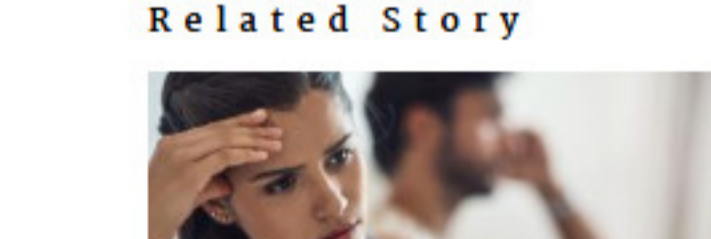
'People who grew up in difficult family circumstances often struggle to trust others,' explains Dr Spelman. 'In early childhood, we learn about what we can expect from others, particularly those close to us.'

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'People whose parents were for whatever reason chaotic and unreliable often find it very difficult to trust others, because their brains have effectively been hardwired to expect to be let down,' she adds.

Mansfield agrees. 'When trust is broken in childhood, usually through abandonment, abuse or criticism from a parent, people have a deep mistrust of others in romantic relationships. This is also the case when in adulthood we experience a let-down or betrayal.'

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## Can you develop trust over time?

The good news is no matter what residual trust issues you bring to your new relationship, everyone is capable of change. 'Fortunately, our brains remain capable of change throughout our lives, and new habits can be learned,' says Dr Spelman.

'Those who have been let down in the past, in the context of a personal relationship, may have been hurt so badly that they struggle to trust anyone again. They, too, can learn to trust in the context of a new relationship.'

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## Why you must learn to trust!

Learning to develop trust is essential if your relationship is going to succeed, because planting seeds of doubt could have the reverse affect on your partner. On the one hand, it makes sense to be wary of a stranger until they've proven themselves to you. But if you put yourself in their shoes, if you met an amazing person and they instantly suspected you of infidelity and treated you suspiciously, having your integrity questioned by someone you really like (when you have given them no reason to) could also be extremely upsetting.

Refusing to trust someone often makes them feel that they might as well fulfil that identity.

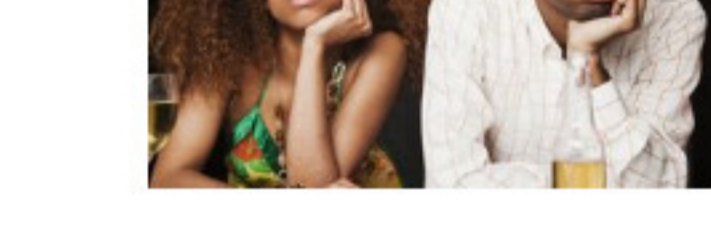
Either way you look at it, while establishing trust and building foundations in a fledgling relationship may be challenging, firing unfounded accusations at one another will really put the damper on the romance.

'Any history of broken trust can set up a pattern of this repeating,' explains Mansfield. 'This is because often we get what we expect. Also, refusing to trust someone new often makes them feel that they might as well fulfil that identity, because whatever they do is not enough.'

Dr Spelman agrees. 'When we have been hurt before—perhaps by our parents or caregivers in childhood, or by a partner in an intimate relationship—we often assimilate the negative feelings associated with this experience and bring them to bear on our new relationship.'

'For example, someone whose former partner cheated on them can be worried that a new partner will do the same thing. If they are not careful, their lack of trust may prompt them to behave in ways that will drive their new partner away, such as snooping through their text messages or their Facebook page.'

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## How to develop trust in a relationship

As your relationship develops, over time it is normal to become more intimate and trusting while you get to know one another. But after a few months, if you find that you are still feeling insecure (without reason) then there are a few things you can do to address your trust issues.

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'Learning how to trust is like learning any new skill. Practice makes perfect,' says Dr Spelman. 'If you tend to panic so far today, for example, try engaging in mindfulness'

meditation or other techniques that keep you in the moment, rather than engaging in catastrophic thinking.'

'Gradually, as they show you that they keep their word and are doing their best in the relationship, you will find it easier to let go of your negative feelings,' she adds.

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## Communication is key

Admitting you feel insecure to your new partner might be the last thing you want to do, but if you open up about your feelings and tell the truth about how you feel, you will be able to work through them together and develop a stronger connection as a result.

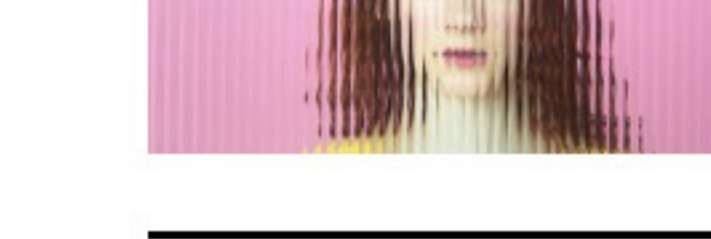
Be clear about your needs and boundaries to create open and honest communication.

'If you have issues with trust, it's important to be upfront about this,' says Dr Spelman. 'You can say something like, "It was really hard on me when I found out that my ex had been lying to me for months, and I still struggle'

sometimes to trust the people I care about." Being clear about your feelings does not give you carte blanche to act on them, but it shows that you are open to exploring your feelings and understanding where they come from.'

'Be clear about your needs and boundaries,' agrees Mansfield. 'Create open and honest communication. Share your feelings, but own them as yours - don't blame them for your past. Talk openly about fears and also expectations. Often what is assumed as rules for a relationship are unique to you!'

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## Learning to love yourself

In the words of RuPaul, - If you can't love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else? Learning to love yourself and develop your own interests and identity outside of the relationship will stand you in good stead.

Try to meet your own needs and develop hobbies and a life outside of your relationship.

'Letting go of the past is key,' says Mansfield. 'Try to see where you played a part. Often, we ignore red flags because we are lonely, needy or desperate to be in a relationship. Try to meet your own needs and develop'

hobbies and a life outside of your relationship.'

'Self-love, confidence work and building a spiritual practice can help you to develop a more self-sufficient inner state, so that you can learn to trust again.'