



How He Can Rebuild Trust



One of the most important things to keep in mind when seeking to rebuild trust is that *trust is a result of safety and security in the relationship*. Focusing your energy on creating those things will bring the trust back into the relationship faster than anything else.

These exercises will discuss ways and give ideas for you to know how you can foster the safety and security necessary for her to open back up to you and heal from the past.

Introduction

HOW TO REBUILD TRUST

The only way your wife can feel confident again that she can let her guard down is if she has a ***feeling*** that she is safe. It's important that you understand that there is no way to create that feeling. If there is any pressure, frustration, annoyance, or any other negative response – those things only slow the process down.

Below is a list of areas in which trust needs to be developed or strengthened. Each woman might be a little different when it comes to how trust can be built in each of these areas, so as a part of her assignment, she is going to share with you what she needs in each of these areas to help you know how to reach the end goal.

She needs to trust that:

- You love and care about her
- Are working to eliminate the addiction
- You will be open / honest with her
- Will be there for her and meet her needs
- You will protect her heart and are there to comfort and care for her and how she feels.
- You're willing to do the work necessary to heal the marriage

Some of these overlap, but being aware that there are different aspects of trust will help you to be clear about where you're working and which parts need attention.

The more predictable and consistent you become, the more safety she'll feel. As you create a specific plan and follow through with action to address each of these areas of trust, she'll know you're committed and trust will start to naturally be rebuilt because she'll see and feel the difference in your approach.

CREATE A PLAN

It's crucial that you develop a plan of action specifically for how you're going to create safety and security in the relationship. She doesn't know and can't verify 100% whether or not you're telling the truth, so the only way she can know if you're changing is by watching your actions and gauging how she feels around you.

Many men mistakenly ask the question, "When is she going to trust me again?" Instead, focus on asking and answering this question, "What can I do to create safety and security for my wife." The answer to this questions will always yield a better result and will clarify the steps you need to take. Here is a short list of ideas from which you can create rituals and habits around in order to stay consistent:

Actively engaged in the work of healing and in the marriage; consistency; opening up and sharing with her what you're feeling and thinking about; learning about yourself and areas to continue to improve and share them with her; reading; journaling; being kind; humility; accountability and acknowledging her pain; service.

Instructions:

Really take some time to think about and write down the ways in which you'll address each of these aspects of trust. There is a space for her to share with you her individual needs and feedback for what will help her specifically.

Create your list first (on the following pages), then as she shares her suggestions with you, write and incorporate them into your list before you share your ideas with her. Be specific and concrete in your ideas and include multiple ideas per section if you can.

1. What ways can you demonstrate to her that you love and care about her?

Example: Spend 30 minutes talking to her each day after dinner without electronics or other distractions.

What she says she needs:

2. How can you be actively working to eliminate the addiction?

Example: Meditation; tracking triggers and processing the emotions that lead to them; journaling; reading addiction-related material and sharing

What she says she needs:

3. Being open and honest with her?

Example: Let her know within 24 hrs if there was a slip; answer questions honestly and directly; taking accountability for your actions; being forthcoming instead of waiting for her to find or bring something up

What she says she needs:

4. How can you be there for her and meet her needs?

Example: Asking how you can help her each day; being available and present if she needs to talk

What she says she needs:

5. Ways to protect her heart and being there to comfort and care for her and how she feels?

Example: Check in with her each night about her day and how she is feeling; be willing to listen and comfort her if she needs support

What she says she needs:

6. How can you show you're willing to do the work necessary to heal the marriage?

Example: Provide consistent reassurance through word and action that you're committed and will do whatever it takes to heal; spending quality time together; having healing conversations about her pain

What she says she needs:

After you both have a chance to share your responses, check in with her and ask her if your plan will help create the safety that you intend. If there are things she needs adjusted, do so accordingly so you know how to most effectively create the conditions for her to trust again.

Don't get overwhelmed and think you have to focus on all of these areas at once. Discuss and choose the most important area for you to focus on first and then make that your primary focus over the following week(s). Continue to expand your focus to other areas as you go.

*Check in with each other regularly! That's the only way you'll know if you're on the right track. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't create trust right away – keep in mind that your goal is to create safety, so when you check in with each other, it's better to ask if she is feeling safer instead of if she's trusting you yet. If she isn't feeling safer yet, check with her and see if you're on the right track.

Keep in mind that this is a process. If she doesn't feel safer immediately, that is normal! It takes time and consistency for her to feel like your changes are going to be permanent. If you get the feedback that you're on the right track, then you'll know that what you're doing is going to work and is being recognized. If it doesn't quickly bring safety, but she's said you're on the right track, then just stay the course and be consistent. You'll get there.

Try not to be discouraged. Know and understand that it'll take some time, and that's ok. The more you make her safety and emotional well being the priority, positive interactions will cascade from that. You can do this. She needs you, and you need her. If you focus on this piece of the puzzle first, she'll get to a place where she can be there for you more fully and the relationship will grow exponentially as a result.