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## Five surprising habits that break trust

### *New research pinpoints specific trust building (and breaking) behaviors*

**BURLINGTON, Vermont** – High-trust organizations outperformed low-trust organizations in total shareholder return on investment by 286 percent, according to a Towers Watson study. Trust is important for employee engagement, teamwork, managing change, leadership development and corporate culture. But how can companies build trust, or rebuild it after a workplace betrayal?

For nearly 25 years, Dennis Reina, PhD, and Michelle Reina, PhD, of **Reina, A Trust Building® Consultancy** have been the pioneering leaders in measuring, creating, and restoring workplace trust with clients like Walt Disney World, American Express and Harvard University. Through their innovative trust assessments, The Reina Trust Scales, the Reinas provide a clear and immediate picture of trust strengths and vulnerabilities within individual relationships, teams and organizations.

Leveraging data from their assessments and more than two decades of proprietary trust-focused research, the Reinas pinpoint the behaviors people practice that both build trust and break trust. "In our work we've found it's the small, subtle and often unintentional trust breaking behaviors that build up to create a deep negative impact," says Michelle.

Throughout their research, the Reinas have pinpointed five surprising behaviors that break trust:

1. **Sharing positive news.** When people prematurely share news that isn't "theirs" to share, they break trust by robbing those tasked with rolling out the information the opportunity to do so thoughtfully.
2. **Saying yes.** Trust is compromised when people fail to deliver because they've overcommitted themselves.
3. **Letting sleeping dogs lie.** Sweeping issues under the rug doesn't make them go away. They're still there; subtly undermining relationships until a tipping point occurs and trust breaks down.
4. **Viewing mistakes negatively.** When people beat themselves and others up for making mistakes, they not only erode trust, they miss out on the deep learning that can come *out* of those mistakes.
5. **Waiting for "I'm sorry."** Even if not "at fault" for a breakdown in trust, people bear a responsibility to acknowledge how they contributed to the problem. Restoring trust begins with each one of us.

The Reinas offer a free Trust Quiz to help people discover how their subtle habits impact trust. For more information, please visit [www.reinatrustbuilding.com/reina-trust-quiz](http://www.reinatrustbuilding.com/reina-trust-quiz).

#### **ABOUT REINA, A TRUST BUILDING CONSULTANCY**

Reina, A Trust Building® Consultancy works with organizations to leverage trust as a competitive advantage that drives business results. Recognized as international authorities on building workplace trust, founders Michelle Reina, PhD and Dennis Reina, PhD, have collectively devoted nearly 50 years to researching trust, developing rigorous assessments to measure trust, and identifying practical steps to rebuild trust when it's been compromised. They've authored two best-selling books: *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization, Third edition*, (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015) and *Rebuilding Trust in the Workplace: Seven Steps to Renew Confidence, Commitment, and Energy* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010). They've been featured in *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME*, *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Management Update* and *USA Today*.

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## About Dennis Reina, PhD and Michelle Reina, PhD *Co-founders of Reina, A Trust Building® Consultancy*



Michelle Reina, PhD and her life and business partner, Dennis Reina, PhD are co-founders of Reina, A Trust Building® Consultancy. Through rigorous, research-based assessments and a compassionate approach that recognizes the human aspect of trust, the Reinas take the guesswork out of trust building in the workplace. Their clients achieve measurable improvements in collaboration and teamwork, employee engagement, leadership effectiveness, workplace culture, and change management.

The Reinas' clients include American Express, Ben & Jerry's, Dartmouth Hitchcock Healthcare, Harvard University, Johnson & Johnson, Lincoln Financial Group, MillerCoors, Nokia, Toyota, Turner Broadcasting, Walt Disney World, and the United States Treasury Department.

Recognized as international authorities on building workplace trust, Michelle and Dennis have collectively devoted nearly 50 years to researching trust, developing rigorous instruments to measure trust, and defining practical steps to rebuild trust that has been compromised. Michelle and Dennis work both together and individually to help organizations achieve business results through trust building.

The Reinas are authors of two award-winning, best-selling books, which have been published in multiple languages: *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization, Third edition*, (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015) and *Rebuilding Trust in the Workplace: Seven Steps to Renew Confidence, Commitment, and Energy* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010).

Their work has been featured in *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Management Update* and *USA Today*.

The Reinas have received several awards, including the World HRD Congress Global Strategic Leadership Award.

Michelle and Dennis are both cancer survivors. In their free time, they enjoy exploring the world, both through global travel and through hiking, biking, swimming, canoeing, and skiing within their home state of Vermont.

For more information, please visit [www.reinatrustbuilding.com](http://www.reinatrustbuilding.com).



## Q&A with Dennis and Michelle Reina

### 1. You've recently completely rewritten *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). What inspired you to take a bestselling book, and completely re-craft it?

Since the publication of our 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, we've continued our 'in the trenches' trust work with leaders and organizations worldwide. We wanted to bring our readers the most current and comprehensive research in building and sustaining trust in the workplace.

Most importantly, we wanted to debunk the myth that maintaining trust is solely the job of leaders. Trust begins with each and every person, at every level of responsibility. Yet, trust is complex. People often don't know what to do to build and sustain trust...or repair it when it's been compromised.

So, we completely rewrote our book to be a trust building field guide. Its intended audience? Anyone who works with another human being. In the book, we give people the specific behaviors to practice to dramatically improve their relationships, even when times are really tough. This edition is an accessible, practical resource to support *everyone* to work through challenging human dynamics, strengthen trust, and build effective relationships and teams.

### 2. For nearly 25 years, you have focused on workplace trust building. What is it about trust that's held your focus for so long?

When we started this work, we said to ourselves, "the need for trust has never been greater." Now, two and a half decades later, we find ourselves saying exactly the same thing, only with more intensity. Why?

People can't do their best work without trust.

Trust means 'uncompromised by doubt.' Every day in workplaces around the world, people are asked to solve complex challenges in the midst of ambiguity and change. They're asked to do more with less, stretch beyond their comfort zones, and achieve stretch goals. People can't do their best work in these conditions if they are mired in doubt. Doubt about others' intentions or capabilities. Doubt about the direction or viability of the organization. Or, most importantly, doubt about their own ability to keep up with the demands placed on them.

The behaviors that build trust are the same behaviors that erase multiple layers of doubt and liberate people to do their best work in relationship with one another.

In our experience, when people are supported to strengthen trust and clear away the noise and confusion, clarity emerges, followed by confidence. From this footing, people lean in. They take risks, speak their truth, and help one another develop. They gain the courage they need to admit mistakes, ask for help, and reach out. They connect with one another at a deeper level, not just as professionals, but as human beings.

People have a powerful need for this deeper connection. It's what allows them to tap into their inner fierceness to go the distance, become truly *great*, and take their organizations to the next level, again and again.

For nearly 25 years, we've been fueled by the transformational business results our clients have achieved. We've been inspired by their requests that we go further and deeper in our trust research in service to them. For us, devoting ourselves to trust building hasn't been a strategic business decision. It's been a natural outcome of our desire to serve our clients most powerfully. It's been our calling.



**3. You often say, “Trust begins with you.” What do you mean by that, exactly, and why is it so important for people to understand this message?**

When we step into organizations around the world, we find – consistently – that creating a trustworthy environment has been placed on the shoulders of leadership. The result of this mindset is that people are waiting for their leaders to step in and restore trust. As they wait, they build barriers around themselves and their areas of responsibility. Essentially, they withhold trust until they’re guaranteed their workplaces will become more trustworthy.

Multiply this behavior by hundreds or thousands of people, and you can imagine the impact on teamwork, collaboration, engagement, and cultural health – not to mention on deliverables and bottom-line results. The key to interrupting distrust’s downward spiral is reversing our thinking about who’s responsible for trust in our workplaces. People don’t have to wait for their leaders to take the first step. Trust begins with each one of us. Trust begins with you.

**4. You’ve built assessments that measure trust at the leadership, team, and organizational levels. How does one go about measuring trust?**

Trust is built and broken through the way people show up and behave in their relationships with one another. Our assessments, which we call The Reina Trust Scales, allow people to recognize and measure how their behavior is building and breaking trust.

Each assessment is built on the research-based, systemic Reina Trust and Betrayal Model® and its Dimensions of Trust: The Three Cs®: Trust of Character®, Trust of Communication®, and Trust of Capability®. When the behaviors identified in our model are practiced, trust is high. When they aren’t, trust is vulnerable. We have nearly 25 years of trust-focused research and consulting experience to support this finding. We routinely put our assessment tools through rigorous psychometric testing, to ensure they are statistically reliable and valid. This means they measure what they say they measure, consistently over time. You can trust the results.

**5. As your clients have moved through your assessment process, what’s the most notable transformation you’ve seen?**

There are several transformations we hold as benchmarks, from a company that moved from lowest to highest producer nationwide to a company that decreased union grievances by 30%. Perhaps the most notable was the organization that salvaged a \$30 million change initiative that had severely veered off course...and increased engagement scores by 25% while getting the initiative back on track.

When we stepped into this organization, the initiative – including the \$30 million in initial costs, as well as the tens of millions of dollars of anticipated savings over the next few years – was in jeopardy. The health of the division was at risk, and so was its ability to navigate the changes ahead.

Just six months after stepping into the trust building process, the division’s employees had reduced their trust breaking behaviors by 80% and increased their trust building behaviors by 63%. In 12 months, engagement scores had risen - by 25%. Within 18 months, the \$30 million system rollout – along with its tens of millions of dollars in potential long-term benefits - got back on schedule. In fact, it was ahead of schedule, and on budget.

The CFO and his leadership team told us that their greatest source of pride was that their people had reconnected with one another, regained a feeling of community, and learned a new way of being as a team.



**6. Where can we learn more about your approach, your book, and your trust assessments?**

We're proud to have recently launched a new website, newsletter, and blog. We also love connecting with people via Twitter and LinkedIn. And of course, we always welcome emails and phone calls.

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