Rebuilding trust

What each person needs to do when trust has been broken.

Trust is the belief that someone will be honest with you, will do what they say, and will not knowingly hurt you. When it is broken, by a lie, a betrayal or a let-down, both people have work to do if the relationship is to continue.

If I broke the trust

- Take full responsibility, with no "but"
- Answer questions honestly, even when it is uncomfortable
- Be open about where I am and what I am doing, without being asked
- Be patient. I do not decide when they should be over it.
- Keep small promises, every time
- Show that I understand the hurt

If my trust was broken

- Allow myself to feel what I feel
- Say what I need in order to feel safer
- Notice the efforts being made
- Decide whether I want to rebuild, and say so
- Try not to use it as a weapon in every row
- Get support for myself

What rebuilds trust

- **Consistency over time.** Not grand gestures. Being reliable in small things, week after week.
- **Transparency.** Volunteering information before being asked.
- **Empathy.** Hearing the pain without getting defensive.
- **Repair when there is a slip.** Owning it at once.

What gets in the way

- Pressure to move on quickly
- Minimising ("it was not that bad")
- More secrets coming out later
- Punishing with no end in sight
- Never talking about it at all

What to expect

- Setbacks, bad days and sudden waves of hurt are part of the process.
- Trust comes back in stages, and it is often different afterwards. Different can still be strong.
- Not every relationship should be rebuilt. If there is ongoing dishonesty, or you are not safe, your wellbeing comes first.

What would need to happen for trust to grow here? What is my part?

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