

Our Intent

Following one of our presentations on *The Speed of Trust*, a man made his way backstage to ask a question that was obviously troubling him deeply. “Are you really *serious* about this?” he asked incredulously. “Are there really more than just a few people out there who operate with the kind of trust you’re talking about?” This man lived and worked in a country that was ripe with corruption, deception, and massive distrust. He was clearly feeling deeply torn. He sincerely wanted to believe what we’d said but was finding it almost impossible in the context of his environment.

To a greater or lesser extent, this same searching question comes to us from people around the world. They’re surrounded by evidence that the world can’t be trusted, yet we’re telling them that trust works—that there are people and companies that, even in the midst of a historic era of distrust, are experiencing the extraordinary benefits of high trust, both personally and professionally. And so they ask: Who are they? What are

they doing? How are they doing it? And . . . is it really possible for me or my organization to do it, too?

These are the questions that have inspired this book. The short answer is “Yes—absolutely!” In the years since the publication of *The Speed of Trust*, we’ve had the opportunity to explore trust issues with a diverse range of highly successful leaders and organizations all over the world. In the process, we’ve gained compelling insights and discovered cutting-edge practical applications that are enabling people and organizations everywhere to exercise what we call “Smart Trust” to achieve extraordinary results.

Our intent in this book is to share these insights and applications with you—particularly the 5 actions these people and organizations have in common. In doing so, we will share some of the stories of these “outliers of success” and how the high-trust relationships and cultures they are creating result not only in the greater economic prosperity trust brings but—even more inspiring—in greater levels of energy and joy.

One of the most exciting dimensions of our work over the past many years has been to see firsthand the renaissance of trust that is gaining momentum and transforming lives and leadership around the globe—paradoxically, even in the midst of the “crisis” of trust that fills today’s headlines. And it’s been a refreshing validation to us to recognize the 5 actions these leaders and organizations share despite their incredible diversity.

We know there is risk in citing specific real-time examples. In the five years following the publication of Tom Peters’s *In Search of Excellence*, some of the “excellent companies” he wrote about had already seen some “less-than-excellent” times. This led him to begin a follow-up book with the words “There are no excellent companies.” Jim Collins experienced similar challenges with *Good to Great*. Recently Warren Buffett wrote to his managers at Berkshire Hathaway, “Somebody is doing something today at Berkshire that you and I would be unhappy about if we knew of it. That’s inevitable: We now employ well over 200,000 people and the chances of that number getting through the day without any bad behavior occurring is nil.” Because of these realities, we can confidently predict that some of the illustrations in this book will be turned upside

down. But we are equally confident that this in no way negates the value of the insights to be gained and the possibilities realized by observing the results of what they're doing and experiencing *now*. In fact, it makes the very point that trust (or distrust) is a product of our behavior. With that in mind, we share a "snapshot" view of some present and past successes, along with our firm belief that in the coming years a great many more positive examples will become evident on every level of society as the ripple effect of this global renaissance of trust creates a rising tide that lifts all boats.

Our intent is also to give you a lens to see how trust issues impact every situation and how you can cut through traditional either/or thinking to extend what we call "Smart Trust," enabling you to operate with high trust in a low-trust world by minimizing risk and maximizing possibilities. In today's networked world, trust has become the new currency—the critical competency for individuals, teams, organizations, and even countries. It's our hope that this book will help you develop the judgment to recognize and extend Smart Trust deliberately so that you can enjoy greater prosperity, energy, and joy in all dimensions of life—to the ultimate end that together we might increase trust, and the benefits of trust, throughout the world.