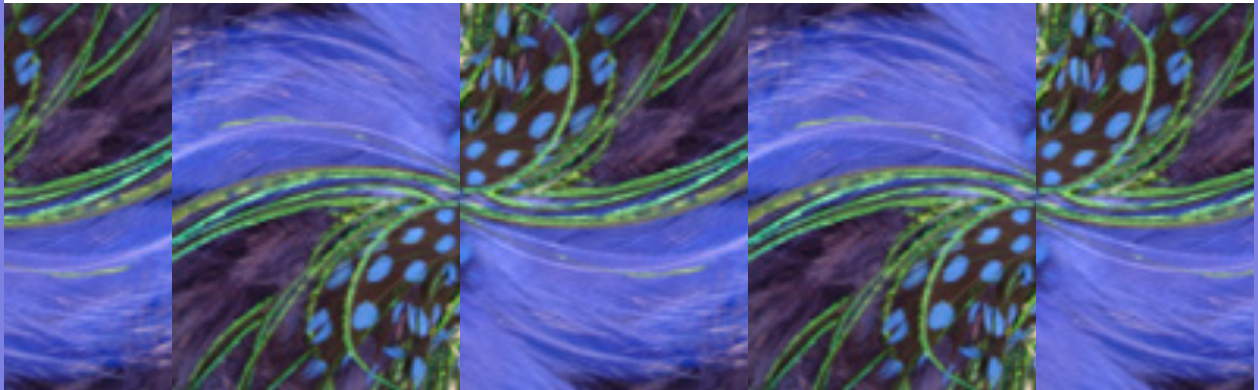


# *Developing* **TRUST**

Practical ways to be discerning when deciding  
who, when, how much, and what kind of trust  
works best in your work relationships



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLIENTS OF  
**ROBIN DENISE JOHNSON, Ph.D.**

## MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TRUST QUESTIONNAIRE

*Instructions: Place an "X" next to all items that you would say describe you.*

1. My friends tell me I am a good listener.	
2. My behaviors, values and beliefs are consistent.	
3. I respect my own knowledge, skills, and judgments.	
4. No matter what, I am myself.	
5. I share information so people can make good decisions.	
6. I tell the truth.	
7. I keep my word. If I say I will do it, I do it.	
8. I do not gossip.	
9. I recognize communication bias and manage bias/micro-aggressions in my environment.	
10. I catch people doing things right and give them positive feedback.	
11. I respect others' knowledge, skills, and judgments.	
12. I accept constructive criticism/feedback with grace.	
13. I receive positive feedback well.	
14. I do not disclose information given to me in confidence.	
15. I offer constructive feedback to others as information - without expecting them to change.	
16. I let people know what is important me	
17. With new info I update my mental files, explore my assumptions, and question my beliefs.	
18. I communicate my expectations to others (with words)	
19. When someone has violated my trust, I let them know it	
20. I speak up against unfair treatment of others when I see it	

## MDTQ - Multi-Dimensional Trust Questionnaire Scores and Explanations

Robin Denise Johnson, Ph.D.

*This Multi-Dimensional Trust questionnaire gives you insight into your propensity to relate to others in ways that gain their confidence. Trust is important when there is risk. Risks could be physical, resource-based, to a relationship, or your reputation. Trust is also important when you are interdependent with others (as in team work), and in multicultural environments (because of many historical inequities). Trust is also the number one thing followers want from their leaders (according to a global Gallup survey). Yet trust is one of those big words, like love, that is difficult to operationalize behaviorally. We know when we have it, when know when it is broken and we feel betrayed, but we do not always know what to do to gain others' confidence. Most of the items in this trust questionnaire are behavioral and when practiced regularly in relationships with others, will increase their propensity to trust you. Having these attitudes - behaviors, feelings, and thoughts - will make you trust worthy.*

**Communication-based trust** is how willing you are to share information, to share difficult truths with people, to disclose things that are important to you, to give and accept feedback, and to maintain confidentiality.

**Character-based trust** is the degree to which you see yourself as a person of good character, virtuous, willing to do your best, to keep your word, to fulfill your promises, to carry out agreements, to act with integrity, and to do so in ways consistent with your values.

**Competence-based trust** is the degree you respect and have confidence in your own and other people's knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgments.

Use the grid below to tally your scores. Circle the number for the item if you selected it. Each question is worth 5 points. Tally your scores for each type of trust, and your Total score.

<b>Communication-Based Trust Items:</b>						Tally
1	5	8	9	10	12	
13	14	15	16	18	19	_____
<b>Character-Based Trust Items:</b>						
2	4	6	7	17	20	_____
<b>Competence-Based Trust Items:</b>						
3	11					_____
<b>TOTAL:</b>						
<b>YOUR OVERALL MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TRUST SCORE:</b>						_____

**Fill in your score for Communication-Based Trust: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 60.**

You got points in Communication-based trust for 12 items.

*Item 1 "My friends tell me I'm a good listener" is important because communication doesn't happen without listening. Listening is, unfortunately, far less practiced than talking. Listening is the meta-emotional intelligence skill and key to effective communication in any relationship. All meaningful relationships require trust. Trust requires good communication. And all good communication requires listening. I think listening is so important that I teach Transformational Listening in most of my programs. I've also produced an audio mini-lecture describing the technique and the benefits of high-quality listening. Let me know if you want access to that by sending me an email.*

*Item 5 "I share information so that people can make good decisions" is essential if you want people to feel empowered. Empowered does not mean abandoning them when they have to make decisions in situations of uncertainty or risk. Empowerment is giving them as much information as you can and trusting them to make the best decision they can by using that information and their own experience.*

*Items 8 & 14 "I do not gossip" and "I do not disclose information given to me in confidence" mean just that - that you do not gossip or share confidences. It's pretty self-evident that people will not trust you if they tell you something in confidence and you broadcast it to others. I do mention in programs though, that it is not kind to ask people to keep secrets. Nor should you share information with people who must disclose certain kinds of information because of their job responsibilities. It is better to refrain from putting your friends in the difficult situation of having to disclose a confidence versus keeping their job.*

*Item 9 "I recognize communication bias and manage bias/micro-aggressions in my environment" is included because we now know how unconscious/implicit bias creates a toxic environment and a significant toll on the people targeted. If you're not familiar with how to recognize bias, how to pause before acting on bias, how to interrupt bias, or your personal biases and triggers - a place to start would be to read either Blind Spot by Banaji & Greenwald or Biased by Eberhardt and take 2-3 Implicit Association Tests (IAT) (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>) to increase your self-awareness. The IAT gives immediate results and are confidential. Both books also give suggestions for how to manage bias at work.*

*There are four feedback items about learning from what works and what does not work - Items 10, 12, 13, and 15. You need to be willing/able to give feedback and to receive feedback. We need to give constructive feedback to correct mistakes. Detecting and correcting errors is one definition of learning. All feedback should be specific, objective, and behavioral. You also need to give positive feedback to reinforce behaviors you want to continue - to let people know what they are doing right. Reinforcing what people do right is highly motivating because it provides goal-directing information for them. The research says that feedback is most effective if when positive reinforcement is given completely separate for critique; AND that the ratio of kudos (positive feedback) to critique is 3:1 at a minimum - that's three kudos for every critique. The feedback sandwich where you say "Great job - here's all the ways you messed up - love working with you!" does not work. And finally, don't try to manipulate or force people to change through giving feedback. Offer the feedback as information.*

*You can share the consequences of a person's behavior if they choose to ignore the feedback. But after sharing the gift of information, it is their choice to change or not to change. You need to release any need you have for them to do it your way.*

*Item 16 was "I let people know what is important to me." This one is about personal disclosure. This does not mean you have to go around telling people everything in your personal life. But you do have to let people who work with you closely get to know you. It is helpful to differentiate between what is personal and what is private. You can share things about yourself that are personal – they help people get to know you. You need not disclose things you consider private. At a certain point in your career the decision to promote you will be less about how well you do what you do (because every one competing for the promotion or the business also has good functional-technical job skills) and more about whether people know, like, and trust you. It's hard for them to trust you if they don't know you. So some disclosure about what's important to you has to occur. I have found in coaching some people of color, women, and LGBT managers that they believe coming out and sharing aspects of their social identity with managers who do not share that identity can be too risky. So in my programs we talk about strategic disclosure. If you wish to discuss this me, contact me \* Robin@DrRobinJohnson.com.*

*The last two items are about what many people consider to be difficult conversations - Items 18 and 19. "I communicate my expectations to others (with words)" - asks if you let others know what you want and need rather than expect them to guess. And the importance of the item "when someone has violated my trust, I let them know it" comes from what we've learned about broken psychological contracts and the damage that results in work relationships. It sometimes amazes me how often people will say something like "Well if she cared about me she would know how I feel!" or "If he just watched my face he could see I wanted X." or "...felt Y." So often we expect others who care about us to read our body language or guess what we're thinking and feeling. People's ability to decode non-verbal language varies greatly by individuals. And then decoding the meaning of the non-verbal cues varies greatly by culture. So it is not helpful for multi-dimensional trust building to expect people to guess what you want or need. Please speak your expectations out loud. If you already do that, great!*

*Trust violations, aka betrayals, occur often. When they do it requires courage to speak up about the violation of your values, assumptions, beliefs or expectations (VABEs). Again, others are not you and may not know what your VABEs are. Letting them know you felt betrayed gives you an opportunity to check whether they intended to betray you. Just reinterpreting their intent, especially if they apologize, can repair the relationship damage. It takes some self-awareness and maturity on your part to clarify what the violated VABE was (sometimes you don't even know your values and beliefs until someone does something completely counter to a belief-value you accepted as universal truth). And it takes healthy emotional maturity to choose to re-trust. We call that forgiveness. Trust takes courage, for sure. But you must have the courage to trust, or you would not be taking this questionnaire.*

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**Fill in your score for Character-Based Trust: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 30.**

*Your score for Character-based trust is based on your responses to 6 items in the questionnaire.*

*First of these was "My behaviors are consistent with my values and beliefs." Having your behaviors consistent with your values and beliefs demonstrates integrity by walking your talk. Of course, you must know your values - and be acting in ways consistent with your cherished beliefs. When you do, you have what many effective leaders have values transparency. Even when people have values different from yours - something we see often in the multicultural arena - people are more likely to trust and respect you when your actions are consistent with your stated values and beliefs.*

*The next item was about authenticity - "no matter what, I am myself." No matter what package you come in (considering all the different social identities in our multi-dimensional workforce), we know that effective leaders find a way to be their whole and authentic selves at work.*

*The next item was about honesty "I tell the truth." Lying is one of the behaviors that will quickly destroy trust in any relationship.*

*The next item was about keeping your promises - "I keep my word. If I say I will do it, I do it." People report far too frequently that their managers 'forget' promises made.*

*The next item is really about stereotyping "With new information I update my mental files, explore my assumptions, and question my beliefs." Stereotypes are all around us and we often make quick judgments about people based on what we've heard and learned about people from various groups. We are in the stereotype zone when we refuse to allow in disconfirming information. Even if something is true about a person in a group, or even some people in a group, it may not be true about the person in front of you. Plus things we do sometimes, we may not do all the time. Being willing to update our files and question our beliefs and assumptions about people when we learn new things about them is the best way to avoid the stereotype zone in multi-cultural interactions.*

*The last of the character-based trust items in this multi-dimensional trust questionnaire is about being an ally "I speak up against unfair treatment of others when I see it." When we fail to speak up, we engage in silent collusion. Our silence is often taken as consent or agreement with the mistreatment. There are lots of reasons we don't speak up against mistreatment of others and Leslie Aguilar's video [OUCH! Your Silence Hurts!](#) goes over the most common ones. But when you do speak up against unfair treatment of others when you witness that, you are being an ally. And that enhances your Multi-Dimensional trustworthiness. People know you expect and want to co-create an environment where everyone is treated fairly.*

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**Fill in your score for Competence-Based Trust: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 10.**

*Your answers to the two items about respecting your own and others' knowledge, skills, and judgments contributed to your Competence-based trust score. When you hover over people and don't let them do the job you hired them to do (assuming you hired competent people), you're micro-managing them. Micromanagement is #3 on the JERK manager list (#2 was lying and #1 was demeaning others). Moreover, respecting others' knowledge, skills, and judgments is particularly important for building trust in the multicultural workplace. People really appreciate it when you hire or ask them to do a job, and then you trust them to do their best. Yet, for many years practitioners in the diversity-inclusion-cultural competence arena have heard from multi-dimensional workers that*

*their competence is questioned, even discounted, in ways that do not happen for others. For instance, in a recent study reported at the Academy of Management, African American managers who support-mentor-promote other multicultural workers or women, those African-American managers find their own competence questioned in subsequent performance reviews. (This reduction in competence-based trust does not happen for white male managers who support-mentor-promote multicultural workers or women.)*

*Thank you for taking this Multi-Dimensional Trust questionnaire. Just the act of doing this increases your awareness of the ways you encourage others to trust. Trust takes courage, for sure. And I am sure you have the courage to trust, or you would not be taking this questionnaire. Recent research says that the fastest way to gain trust is to give it. So take one more courageous step. Look at an item that you did not select – and make a commitment to start doing that behavior – a behavior that demonstrates your trust in others. That step will make your workplace even more inclusive.*

*Peace, Dr. Robin J.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Robin Johnson is an educator, coach, and dancer. As an educator, her key strength is making research practical for people who lead and manage people. As an educator and coach, she's known for her compassionate clarity.

Dr. Robin has been Executive Education Faculty and Faculty Director for a number of UCLA-Anderson Leadership Development programs since 1998 including the Multi-Dimensional Leaders' Institute, Head Start New Directors' Mentoring Program and Management Fellows Programs, LGBTQ+ Leadership Institute, Women's Leadership Institute, African American Leadership Institute. She is the program designer and faculty leader for several custom programs for corporate clients including the Black African American Leaders Program at Wells Fargo, the Multicultural Leadership Development Program at Novartis, and NAMIC's Leadership Seminar.

She is known as a "Soft Skills Specialist." She designs, teaches, and develops programs based on her books, workbooks and core topics including: Inclusive Leadership, Dance of Leadership (Leadership Styles), Cultural Competence, Mitigating {Unconscious} Bias, Career by Design, the Six Secret Soft Skills, Working the Birkman Method, the Gamma Project Team video, Multicultural Teams, Empowered Leadership, Transformational Listening, Mentoring & Networking, and Don't Be a J.E.R.K. Manager.

Dr. Robin is a Harvard Business School trained Ph.D. and wrote an award-winning dissertation on diversity, work-life balance and empowerment. Her BA is in International Relations / World History from Brown University and her Masters in Social Psychology from Harvard. She was also faculty at Darden-University of Virginia, Cal Poly Pomona, and UCLA – as well as a Visiting Professor at Ozyegin Business School in Istanbul, Turkey. She worked as an international finance manager for 10 years prior to attending graduate school (JP Morgan Chase, McDonald's Corp, and Lloyds Merchant Bank).

She does coaching using the Birkman Method (Master Certified Professional), Clifton Strengthsfinder, Korn-Ferry 360 Feedback, the Values in Action (VIA) Character Strengths, and her own Career by Design and Intuitive Coaching Methodologies.

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