

## **Tower of Trust Activity**



In this activity, teams are tasked with building a trust tower.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate how team members build trust
2. Demonstrate how team members destroy trust
3. Demonstrate how different team mixes affect outcomes and team success

Opening: Trust is the essential foundation to a successful coaching relationship. Without trust, nothing can be built upon for positive outcomes. Negative feelings such as apathy, disengagement, boredom, and withdrawal can occur without genuine trust and respect.

### **Instructor demo:**

1. Take out a few blocks
2. Say: I am going to demonstrate this idea by building a small tower of trust.
3. Ask: what is the best way to do so?
4. Demonstrate: try building an object by placing one piece vertical, and stacking – it will fail.
5. Demonstrate: try building the object by placing two or three pieces flat, and building on top.

Close: We need a solid foundation of trust or the whole coaching relationship falls apart.

Now, it's your turn to try to build your tower of trust.

### **Supplies:**

- 1 set of wooden blocks
- 1 set of cards (shuffled from main deck)
  - 20 trust-breaker cards
  - 20 trust-building cards
- Timer

### **Setup:**

- Each team gets one (1) set of wooden blocks, one (1) set of cards (20 each).

Cards are based on "Trust Me: 55 Ways to Build Trust and Credibility," and "50 Ways to Lose Trust and Credibility" used with permission by Frank Sonneberg.

## **Instructions:**

### **Round #1:**

- Teams need to build their tower as high as possible.
- Select player 1 by birthdate rank.
- Player 1 draws a card
  - If it is a trust-builder, place a piece down.
  - If it is a trust-breaker, remove a piece or don't place one.
- Time Limit: Gauge on interest and speed

### **Round 1 Debrief (Suggested questions):**

1. What was challenging about this round?
2. What was easy about this round?
3. Do you feel it was unfair? Why or why not?
4. Do you see these behaviors in your teams?
5. Is trust easy to build?
6. Is trust easy to maintain?
7. How fast can trust break?
8. How can we protect our tower of trust?
  - a. Glue
    - i. What is the glue that holds trust?

### **Round #2 (Optional)**

Same but with reshuffled cards and a new hand

### **Round 2 and/or Activity Debrief**

Most likely, we won't be able to hand-pick who we coach or interact with in our work teams. Sometimes one very negative person can poison the enthusiasm of a team, and really crumble a trust tower, or keep it from building. Sometimes, a positive team that trusts each other can do amazing things. You may be in an environment where you can either lift or lower trust.

1. Compare your experience from the first round to second round. Did anything change?
2. What was easy about this round?
3. What was hard?
4. Did it seem "unfair" to be based on the luck of the draw?
5. Self-reflection – what do you do to build or break trust?
6. What qualities do you see in other teams/relationships that you can emulate?