

Exploring Beyond Divorce - Session 11 Exercise

Re-Learning Trust

This exercise is designed to help you re-learn trust after divorce or the end of a significant relationship. Rather than treating trust as a moral quality—something people either have or don't—this exercise invites you to see trust as a practical tool: a way of assessing risk and coordinating action with others.

The goal is not to force trust, but to develop clarity, discernment, and choice.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You may find it helpful to:

- Choose a quiet, grounded space
- Set aside 30–45 uninterrupted minutes
- Write honestly, without pressuring yourself to trust anyone yet

Trust develops over time. There is no deadline.

PART 1: YOUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH TRUST

After divorce, trust often feels fragile, confusing, or risky.

A. How would you describe your current relationship with trust?
(For example: guarded, cautious, hopeful, withdrawn, uncertain.)

B. In what situations do you notice trust feels hardest right now?

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PART 2: REDEFINING TRUST AS ASSESSMENT

Trust can be understood as the emotion that allows us to coordinate action with others.

A. What changes for you when you think of trust as an assessment rather than a moral obligation?

B. Where might you have expected trust to 'just appear' rather than be developed intentionally?

PART 3: ASSESSING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness can be evaluated using three key elements.

Sincerity:

A. Is this person sincere about what they promise?

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Competence:

B. Do they have the ability and capacity to do what is promised?

Reliability:

A. Based on past experience, how consistently do they follow through?

PART 4: DOMAIN AND STANDARDS

Trust is not universal—it is domain-specific and measured against standards.

In what areas of life do you need higher standards of trust right now?

(For example: finances, parenting, emotional intimacy.)

Where might it be reasonable to allow lower standards or limited trust?

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PART 5: YOUR ROLE IN BUILDING TRUST

Trust is built and maintained through actions.

A. What promises are you currently making to yourself or others?

B. Are there any promises you could make smaller, clearer, or more realistic?

PART 6: REPAIRING OR RELEASING TRUST

Not all trust can—or should—be repaired.

A. Where might trust be repairable through honest conversation or apology?

B. Where might it be healthier to accept that trust cannot be rebuilt?

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CLOSING REFLECTION

Read back over what you've written.

A. What feels clearer about trust now?

B. What is one small, thoughtful way you might practice trust—or discernment—in the coming weeks?

<p>Trust does not require certainty. It requires awareness, choice, and care.</p>
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