

Second Edition, Revised and Expanded

DENNIS S. REINA, PH.D.

MICHELLE L. REINA, PH.D.

TRUST AND BETRAYAL IN THE WORKPLACE

*Building **Effective Relationships**
in Your Organization*

HOW TRUST IS REBUILT: THE SEVEN STEPS FOR HEALING



Chest aching, stomach churning, Roberta splashed water on her face as she fought back tears of shock, horror, and deep hurt. She could not believe what she had just heard. She honestly thought she and Carlos were totally aligned. What a way to find out they were not!

The company president had given Roberta the responsibility of overseeing the design and development of a major building complex. Roberta asked Carlos to work with her on developing the proposal outlining the approach to the project. She had tremendous respect for Carlos's skill and talent, and they had worked well together in the past.

Roberta felt that she and Carlos had developed a solid proposal and looked forward to reviewing it with the president. At the start of the review meeting, she could not believe her ears when the president mentioned that Carlos had stopped into his office that morning—behind Roberta's back—and had announced that he had major concerns about the proposal and about Roberta's ability to oversee the project. Roberta was flabbergasted.

Betrayal catches most of us off guard. As in Roberta's case, major betrayals often seem to come out of the blue and knock us off our feet. To cope and get through the initial shock of our experience, we may be inclined to repress our pain or become swept up in confusion and hurt. Many of us become skillful at distracting ourselves by keeping busy with work and materialistic concerns in an attempt to shield ourselves from feeling our pain. Others will seek outside entertainment or turn to drugs, alcohol, or food.

WE HAVE CHOICE

When we have been betrayed, we often feel helpless and hopeless. We feel as though we have no control over what was “done to us.” We indeed do not have control over the behaviors of others; however, we do have control over how we *choose to respond*. We may choose to remain angry, bitter, or resentful or to assume the posture of a victim, locking into what “they did to us.” We may even choose to betray in return in an effort to get back at the betrayer. We may choose to embrace the pain of betrayal. We may seek to understand it and to work through it to heal, to deepen our understanding of our relationships with ourselves and with others.

When we deny ourselves the opportunity to heal from our pain, we betray ourselves. We rob ourselves of the opportunities that healing provides: the insights, the lessons, our restored capacity for trust, and potential future opportunities. When we choose to embrace our pain and work through it, we are rewarded with a renewed sense of trust in ourselves and a deeper appreciation of relationships with others. We regain our wholeness. Although none of us is likely ever to seek to experience betrayal, we can be grateful for it because of the gifts the healing provides. As Ginger said during one of our trust-building programs, “I am grateful for my experiences of betrayal because of how they contributed to the person I am today. They led me to the relationships I hold most precious and to the place I am in my life.” Betrayal can be a gift and a teacher, if we allow it to be.

In organizations, we see people at all levels feeling betrayed. We see leaders feeling betrayed by inconsistencies in the systems of which they are a part. We see employees feeling betrayed as a result of the way decisions have been made or changes orchestrated. As noted elsewhere,

betrayal is often not a result of what happened but rather of *how* it happened. Leaders may honestly believe that the decision to downsize, merge, cancel a product line, restructure a department, or bypass someone for promotion was absolutely in the best interest of the long-term health of the organization. However, when they ignore the impact of those decisions and particularly the impact of the manner in which those decisions were carried out, people feel betrayed. Betrayal occurs when *decisions that affect people's lives are carried out without awareness and sensitivity to their impact*.

In such cases, a double betrayal occurs: the leader's self-betrayal in failing to honor the integrity and spirit of leadership, and a betrayal of the people and organization the leader leads and serves. Both result in loss.

Few of us know how to deal with the emotional pain of betrayal, because our culture doesn't encourage reflection and genuine expression of our feelings. Experiencing a major betrayal is like experiencing a death. We have feelings of loss—of plans, jobs, dreams, relationships, trust in others or ourselves. Our hearts ache, our capacity to trust may be bruised, and our innocence is tarnished.

Trust is not necessarily the same as naiveté, but before a betrayal, we may be oblivious to the risks involved in trusting. Some psychologists say that trust cannot be fully realized without betrayal. It is only after individuals have experienced betrayal and completely know the risks that trust can be fully established. We have found this to be true in our trust-related work with thousands of people. Honoring the trust in relationships is like taking care of the health of the body. Having dealt with two bouts of cancer ourselves, we can attest that a person can't really appreciate his health until he has been seriously ill. That same line of reasoning suggests that we can't really know and appreciate trust until we have experienced the loss of it.

This does not mean that we should run back and restore our trust in relationships with our betrayers. On the contrary, before we approach anyone else, we need first to allow ourselves to take in our experience, honor it, and work with it. We need to allow ourselves to go through a process of healing. Because a major betrayal is like a death and when we experience a loss, we need to go through a grieving process. When we do so, we open the door to healing and to new possibilities with relationships. We are then available to assist others with their healing.

Whether we are the betrayed or the betrayer, the experience of betrayal provides an opportunity to discover more about ourselves. This is something many of us want, need, and seek. We want to understand and arrive at meaning that enriches us. But we often ask ourselves how: How do we deal with the depth of pain we are feeling? How do we resolve past hurts so that we see hope in rebuilding relationships? How do we understand what happened?

As noted, experiencing a betrayal has much in common with experiencing a death. There is a sense of loss. Healing after a betrayal, as after a death, requires some form of grieving. In her examination of death and dying, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross defined the steps of the grieving process: shock, anger, denial, rationalization, depression, and acceptance.¹ Our Seven Steps for Healing (see Figure 5) build on Kübler-Ross's observations and provide manageable steps to help us acknowledge and move through our hurt, with support to reframe our experience, take responsibility, let go, and move on. It is through the seven steps that we learn the lessons betrayal has to teach us about ourselves, relationships, and life.

Each of the seven steps represents a phase of the healing process, and although they are numbered sequentially, we do not work through them in a linear fashion. Different people go through the steps in different ways. You may be in multiple steps at the same time, or you may have completed one step and moved on to the next, only to reexperience aspects of the earlier step. Feelings come in waves; there are highs and lows, ebbs and flows—and movement toward *healing*.

THE SEVEN STEPS FOR HEALING

The Seven Steps for Healing are intended to serve as a framework to help us work through the painful feelings of betrayal toward renewal. They address healing on the individual, team, and organization levels because healing needs to occur at all levels. For teams and organizations to heal from betrayal, individuals need to heal first. In this section, we explore how each step assists us in healing. The Trust Building in Action section at the end of this chapter explores how leaders can use the seven steps to assist teams. In Chapter Eleven, we explore how the steps can be used to help organizations heal from betrayal.

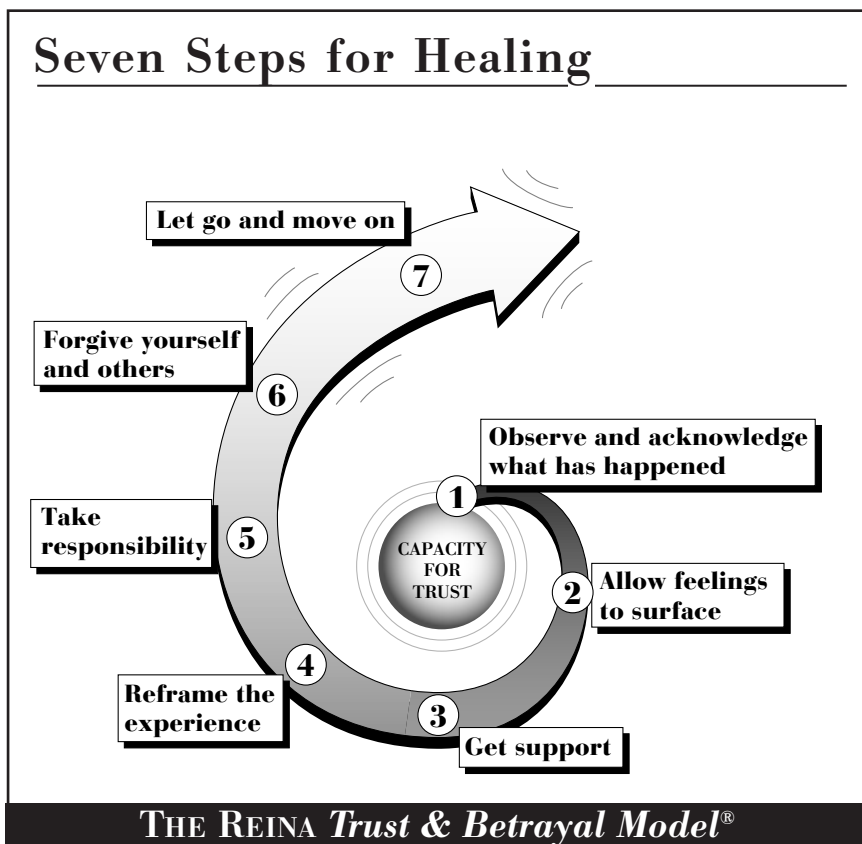


Figure 5 Seven Steps for Healing

Step 1: Observe and Acknowledge What Has Happened

“I couldn’t ignore what had happened. In spite of the fact that I wanted to run away from it all and continue working harder and harder, I couldn’t ignore the deep pain I was feeling in the pit of my stomach. It was as if someone punched me in the gut and ripped out my insides. I was hurting. I was angry, and I hated my coworker’s stealing the credit for work I had done and then lying about it to make me wrong.”

Moving from betrayal to trust starts with self-discovery. The first step in moving out of betrayal is awareness. Notice what you are experiencing

and acknowledge what is so. Observe your thoughts: “I was taken advantage of,” “He double-crossed me,” “I gave my best to this company, and this is what I get?” Through these observations, acknowledge your true feelings: “I’m angry,” “I’m depressed,” “I feel taken advantage of,” “I feel betrayed,” “I feel like hell!” Do not try to analyze, understand, or intellectualize your thoughts and feelings; just “simply notice” them. Ignoring or denying how you honestly think or feel about what has happened will block the healing process. You must consciously observe and acknowledge your thoughts and feelings before you can do something about them.

There are two aspects of the betrayal that you must observe and acknowledge: what has happened and the impact on you. Giving yourself the opportunity to observe and acknowledge what has happened is critical to the healing process. You cannot heal that which you have not observed.

Step 2: Allow Feelings to Surface

“I was livid! Yet deep down I was really hurting. I hated the person for what they had done to me, and I hated myself for being so naive that I didn’t see it coming. I couldn’t sleep, couldn’t eat, my stomach was in knots, my head was throbbing—I ached all over. All I wanted to do was wallow in self-pity. ‘Why me?’ I said. I didn’t deserve this!”

Give yourself permission to feel. After all, when you have been betrayed, you hurt. Once you are consciously aware of your feelings, allow yourself to feel your pain—all of it. You have experienced a loss; acknowledge and grieve for that loss. You need to honor and respect your emotions. They are central to the healing process. They are real and have a right to be expressed. The most effective way out of the pain is *through* the pain. Use your body as an instrument of healing by allowing yourself to feel your emotions. If you feel anger, get angry. If you are afraid, feel afraid. It’s okay to feel lousy.

Recognize that nobody else can do it. This is a job nobody can do for you. In our professional lives, there are many tasks we can delegate to people, but grieving is not one of them. This is your work. You may attempt to

avoid grief, but the only effective way to experience true healing is to work through it. For those of us willing to embrace the grieving process, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and renewal awaits us. Healing does provide deeper value and meaning to the pain you are experiencing, though that may be hard to believe while you are in it.

Give yourself quiet time alone. Each of us needs to create time and space in our lives to get in touch with and explore our feelings. For some people, reflective time spent writing in a journal may be therapeutic; others may prefer physical exercise. What is important is not *what* you do but *how* you do it. Choose an activity that helps you get in touch with your feelings rather than escape and avoid them.

Say no to guilt. The betrayal may occur only once, but we may relive it in our minds a thousand times. If you are like many people who are hard on themselves, you may become obsessed with guilt and worry. You replay over and over again the injustices that you suffered. By doing so, you hurt yourself even more. Although it is important to feel your feelings in order to grieve, feeling guilt and worry are of no positive value and are not helpful emotions for healing. They drain your energy, cloud your thinking, and clutter your emotions.

Step 3: Get Support

“I need help! I can’t go on trying to do my job as if nothing happened, feeling like this. I need to talk with someone—someone I trust—which isn’t too many people these days. I can’t confide in my coworker Tammy; she would blab it all over the department. I can’t go to my supervisor, Tom; he may use it against me in my performance review. Who can I rely on that I can have confidence in? I’ll seek help outside the organization, maybe a coach or counselor.”

Healing from betrayal is difficult to do alone. We all need support to help us fully observe and acknowledge what happened, to allow our feelings to surface, and to understand them. Yet it may be difficult for us to reach out. When we have been deeply hurt, we are feeling vulnerable, and our instinct

may be to draw back. We may find ourselves less trusting of others and ourselves and may therefore feel disinclined to share our experience.

Although this reluctance is completely understandable, you must find a way to reach out. This is a time to be good to yourself, and getting support is one way of doing that. It may be helpful to consider the options available to you and select the one with which you are the most comfortable. You may turn to a colleague, friend, or family member. Alternatively, you may turn to a counselor, support group, member of the clergy, or professional coach. Often someone you perceive to be a neutral third party may allow you to feel safest to express yourself and reach out for support.

Share your feelings with this “trusted adviser.” In dealing with major betrayals, have him or her assist you in reconnecting with painful feelings from your past that are related to your present circumstance. Use this support to help you confront feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and powerlessness so that you may reestablish your self-esteem and return to a fuller sense of self. Have the person help you see the choices and options available to you.

In dealing with an accumulation of minor betrayals, you may have to work through them while they continue because you have limited control over them. A good coach or counselor can help you redefine your expectations and options given your current situation. For example, you may have a supervisor who behaves inconsistently or a coworker you cannot rely on. Support in this context includes helping you clarify what is reasonable to expect, identifying best- and worst-case scenarios, and recognizing what options you have. Although you cannot change others’ betraying behaviors, you have options to consider regarding how to respond.

Step 4: Reframe the Experience

“Why did this happen to me? What surrounding circumstances led to this betrayal? What messages do I need to hear at this time in my life? What lessons do I need to learn?”

Reframing the experience of betrayal is an important aspect of the healing process. It is here that we use our hurt and pain as stepping stones to healing. We begin by putting the experience into a larger context. We

reframe it by considering the bigger picture, the surrounding circumstances—those that were in our control and those that were outside our control. We do so by asking guiding questions that help us see the betrayal differently.

Healing is a journey of inquiry. Your reflecting on reframing questions will enable you to make meaning out of what you experienced. The following are some of the questions that people we have supported through healing typically ask: Why did this happen? What extenuating circumstances might be at play? What is the purpose of this event in my life at this point? What options do I have for doing things differently? What lessons do I need to learn? What can I take from this experience in moving forward?

Reflecting on these questions will help you sort out your thoughts and emotions and arrive at greater insight. Take yourself to a place of stillness. Listen to your inner voice; it will answer these questions. Look for the greater purpose. Reframing your perspective on a betrayal can help you see that there is a greater purpose to this experience. Through reframing, you are able to transform your experience of betrayal from a trauma to a rite of passage. You will be able to use the hurt and pain as stepping stones to your spiritual growth and as an opportunity to develop your capacity for trust in yourself even further.

That which does not kill us makes us stronger! We gain inner strength and resilience. We see the benefit to our personal development. Whether the betrayal was intentional or unintentional, we learn to listen to and trust in our higher self. We see life's process as one that helps us renew, heal, and transform our experiences. We deepen our capacity to trust ourselves. We deepen our understanding and respect for relationships.

Step 5: Take Responsibility

“What was my role in this experience?” Marjorie asked herself. What did I do or not do that contributed to this betrayal? What could I have done differently? What do I need to say or do now to put this issue to rest? How do I protect myself in the future from this happening again?”

When people are in pain, they tend to project their feelings onto others. Take responsibility for your role in the process. After feeling betrayed, many people are obsessed with blaming the culprit, pointing fingers or getting revenge. There is no benefit to this perspective. Rather than dwell on who is at fault, you must take responsibility for your reactions and your part in the process. It is far more supportive of your healing to accept responsibility for working things through than it is to place blame and cast judgment. Healing and growth require you to be accountable for your behavior and the choices you made that may have contributed to the betrayal—yes, even though “they” may have been misguided or wrong. You must always consider what your part might have been. That exploration supports your finding “your truth.”

In any relationship between two people, both contribute to the unfolding dynamics. When we accept responsibility for our reactions and resulting choices, we are in a better position to examine what led up to the precipitating event and how we may have contributed to it. We may ask ourselves: What role did I play in the process? What did I do or not do that contributed to the betrayal? Am I owning or disowning my part? Am I making excuses or diverting blame away from myself? Do I have a need to make the other person wrong? What could I have done differently? What actions can I now take to take charge of the situation?

We all have choices in any situation, even when we are hurting.

Step 6: Forgive Yourself and Others

“I need to forgive myself—for being so naive. I was working hard and doing all I could to keep up, and I was blindsided. Now I know better. I may forgive George, because carrying the anger is wearing me down. But I will never forget the lessons I have learned—nor should I. They are too darn valuable to forget.”

Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves. Not everyone sees forgiveness this way. Some may see it as letting the other person off the hook. Our view is that forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves to free ourselves from the burden of bitterness and resentment. In this light, forgiveness

is more for us than for the other person. When we forgive, we are the ones who benefit first. Forgiveness gives us an opportunity to heal our wounds more rapidly. If in order to forgive we are waiting for an apology from the person who betrayed us, we become the victim once again, this time holding ourselves hostage in waiting for an act of contrition or admission of guilt.² An apology may certainly be warranted and may support our healing. However, we can move through the seven steps in the absence of it *if we choose to*.

Forgiveness is healing. Holding on to negative feelings of anger, resentment, and bitterness can deplete our spirit and interfere with our capacity to trust. However, with forgiveness, we not only help heal ourselves but also create an opportunity for healing to happen between us and the person who hurt us.

Forgive others. In the process of forgiving, we experience hurt, hate, and healing.³ In our hating, we cannot forget how much we hurt. With a major betrayal, we may want our betrayer to hurt as much as we do. With a minor betrayal, we simply may not have the energy to wish the betrayer well. Though none of us wants to admit it, when we hate, it is extremely difficult to heal. To shift from hate to healing, our personal insight is critical. We need to shift our focus from our betrayer to our wounded selves. We need to detach from the person who hurt us and let go.

Forgiveness may be likened to a kind of “spiritual cleansing,” a cleaning of the clutter of the wrongs our betrayer did to us and a separating of the person from the deed. Through the lens of compassion, we may choose to look at our betrayer differently. We may see her as a person who is struggling and in her own pain. We may offer the benefit of the doubt; we may consider, Is it possible that she lost her sense of herself? Is it possible she betrayed herself in the process of betraying me?

When we can do this, we are able to see our betrayers as people with needs, feelings, and vulnerabilities rather than as evildoers from the dark side. And when it comes right down to it, we are mirrors of each other. At the bottom of it all, we are like them and they are like us. They just may have been stressed, up against a wall, and doing the best they could, and lost their footing, just as we have—many times.

Full healing occurs when we invite the person back into our lives. This is challenging because it depends as much on the other person as on

us. Both parties have to be willing to come together. If the other person is not, we must heal within ourselves.

To achieve reconciliation between the two parties, we expect our betrayers to listen to and hear our claims, acknowledge and honestly apologize for what they did, understand the depth of the pain they caused us and feel the hurt we felt, and make new promises that they intend to keep. They must give back more than what was taken.

Forgiveness is *not*, however, condoning the betrayal behavior. Forgiving does not mean we are saying that the act of betrayal was okay. We are saying only that we understand.

Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves. When we don't forgive, we betray ourselves and others. This dynamic restricts the flow of life energy in us, in the people with whom we are in relationship, and in the organization we serve. Forgiveness is about healing. When we don't allow ourselves to heal, we betray ourselves.

How do we know forgiveness has begun? When we can think about individuals who betrayed us and wish them well! In situations where people are unwilling and unable to come together with us, we can still forgive them and free ourselves—in our minds and in our hearts.

Forgive ourselves. Most of the betrayals that occur at work are unintentional. Hurting others does not mean we are bad people. Most of the time we hurt others through oversights, rushing, and cramming to do more with less time, energy, and money. The more self-aware we are, though, the more we feel the pain we caused others.

Forgiving ourselves is as important as forgiving others. In forgiving ourselves, we need to be candid, clear, courageous, and responsible. We need to be candid by honestly facing the facts, admitting our wrongdoing and our faults, and acknowledging the pain we caused. We need to be mentally clear and put our inner critic on mute. We need to clear our heads to make way for an open, forgiving heart. We need to forgive ourselves for the wrongdoing we did. We need to be courageous and face ourselves and others we have wronged and let go of any shame. Finally, we need to be specific about what precisely we are forgiving ourselves for. Perhaps we were selfish by focusing solely on what was in our best interest or did not keep a promise or did not speak the truth. We can not forgive what we have not identified needs forgiving.

Step 7: Let Go and Move On

“It is time to let go and move on. I’ve learned some lessons—difficult as they were. I have spent enough time, energy, and emotion on this experience for a lifetime. I would not want to go through this again, but I am grateful for the experience and the lessons it provided me. It has strengthened me, and I’m glad it’s over!”

The process of forgiving, letting go, and moving on deepens our relationship with ourselves. How do we know we are ready to move on? When we are able to reflect on the experience of betrayal and have a sense of inner peace. Yes, there may still be a dull pang of pain, yet the tears no longer flow.

In looking back over the experience of betrayal, we reflect on what we learned about ourselves and others that we will use in the future. We identify what we will do differently next time. We gain clarity about our approach to future relationships. No, we don’t forget. But we remember in support of our relationships.

Choose to act differently. Like learning a new skill, learning to relate to yourself or others in a different way, with heightened awareness, takes practice, time, patience, and self-care. Start with small steps. Experiment with what works and what doesn’t. Focus on what is in your power to control. Trust in yourself and in the process of healing.

Focus on being. We spend much of our professional lives focusing on where we would like to go in our careers and what we need to do to get there. We spend little or no time reflecting on who we are and what kind of person we are in our relationships. Many of us neglect this area. If we want to develop as leaders of people and if we want to have trusting relationships, we need to know ourselves. We do not heal by trying to be something other than who we are, but by being fully aware of who we are and honoring that knowledge.

Lighten up. Be careful not to take yourself too seriously. You should of course be conscientious about your work, your job, and your behavior, but taking yourself too seriously puts distance between you and others. Cut yourself and others some slack!

THE SEVEN STEPS HELP US HEAL

When it comes to going through the pains of betrayal and rebuilding trust in ourselves and our coworkers, there is no spontaneous healing. In fact, it takes a lot of hard work and courage. However, working through these seven steps will help us heal, let go, and move on.

The process of forgiving, letting go, and moving on realigns us with our sense of self. By being more fully aware of who we are, we expand our capacity for trust in ourselves and in others and the depth of our relationships. *We* are the gift to ourselves.

Each of us will heal in our own way. We will need to spend more time on some steps than on others, especially when working through our feelings. Because intense feelings come in waves, we may progress through several steps, only to go back and deal with additional feelings that may surface. Working through one experience may kick up the pain from previous experiences. We may also be working on multiple steps at once. The sequence through the steps is not important. What is important is that we, in our own way, go through the process with honesty and integrity. By facing betrayal in a conscious way, we can move toward greater understanding of the value of the experience and develop a greater capacity for trust in ourselves and in others. Only in this way can we find value and meaning in the pain and form enriched relationships in the future. We are then able to embrace the gifts healing offers.

TRUST BUILDING IN ACTION

Reflecting on Your Experience

1. Consider the Seven Steps for Healing. Were you able to complete all seven steps when you were betrayed? If yes, what were your feelings as you completed each step? How did it feel when you were able to move on?
2. If you were not able to complete all seven steps, where did you stop? What contributed to your halting at that point? Were you frustrated at not completing the steps? What ideas did you gain from this chapter that will help you complete the steps?

3. In the future, how are you going to use the seven steps? How do you see their use as a pathway to healing painful experiences?

Application Exercise

The following questions are intended to facilitate dialogue and begin the healing process as a team. The nature of this process requires that the seven steps be facilitated by skilled facilitator(s). It is essential that they ensure the psychological and physical safety of the group to enable the healing process to begin. Implement confidentiality agreements or ground rules with the group before beginning the process.

1. *Observe and acknowledge what has happened.* How can we start the healing process? Reflect on the circumstances that caused you or your teammates to feel betrayed. You may use the betrayal continuum at the end of Chapter Seven to list and categorize betrayals within your group or team. Share those findings with your teammates.
2. *Allow your feelings to surface.* What feelings are present regarding each of these betrayals? Notice how you feel when you are betrayed. List the emotions you feel. Do you feel angry? Vindictive? Hurt? Sad? In pain? Acknowledge your feelings. When you share your experience with others, remember to use “I” statements rather than blaming others: “I feel angry” rather than “You made me feel angry.” This is easier said than done. When we are in pain, we want to strike back and get revenge on the person who caused that pain.

Notice how your teammates feel about being betrayed. Listen to understand what they are saying. It is helpful not to get defensive or make excuses for what happened. Simply acknowledge what they are saying. For the healing process to begin, people need to know that they are heard.

3. *Get support.* What kind of support, if any, do we need? After allowing feelings to surface, notice if you feel rejected or abandoned. The betrayal experience may trigger a fear of loss, separation, or abandonment based in our past as well as in the present (loss of security, status, or a paycheck). What support do you need to help you deal with these feelings? Individually, you may want or need to talk to

someone you trust about your feelings. You may seek professional assistance (human resource professional, employee assistance program counselor, psychotherapist, and so on). As a team, it is important to have skilled facilitator(s) assist group members in dealing with their feelings.

4. *Reframe the experience.* How can we reframe the experience? Look at the big picture. What were the surrounding or extenuating circumstances that led to the betrayal? Which circumstances were beyond your control? Which were within your control?
5. *Take responsibility.* What do we need to do to take responsibility? What part did you play in the process? What did you do or not do that contributed to the betrayal? Is it possible that you did not express yourself clearly or set firm boundaries with the other person? Do you have a need to make the other person wrong so you can be right? How did you betray yourself or the other person in the relationship? What actions can we take to take charge of the situation?
6. *Forgive yourself and others.* How can we forgive ourselves and others? Are we ready to forgive? What needs to happen for forgiveness to take place? Realize that each of us has positive and negative sides, strengths and weaknesses. Notice the worst negative trait of your betrayer, and ask yourself if you have ever lost your sense of self and behaved in that way. We betray ourselves when we try to negate the fact that we have a shadow side and attempt to disown the part of ourselves that we find distasteful. Acknowledging your weaknesses helps you forgive and have compassion for yourself and others.
7. *Let go and move on.* What do we need to do to let go of these feelings and perceptions? What needs to be said or done to put this experience behind us? Have each team member reflect on these questions and share his or her needs with the group. Define and record action steps and implementation strategies to bring closure to this process.

 **Trust Note**

Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves. Forgiveness is about healing. When we don't allow ourselves to heal, we betray ourselves and others. We restrict the flow of life energy within us and within the organization.

We can help ourselves forgive others by asking these questions:

- What needs to happen for forgiveness to take place?
- What do I need the most?
- What do I think the other most needs?

 **Trust Tip**

Life's most painful experiences often provide life's most powerful lessons!