

# SUMMARY

## DARING TO TRUST

DAVID RICHO



# **Summary of “Daring to Trust” by David Richo**

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Written for those who struggle to trust themselves  
and those around them, *Daring to Trust* (2010)  
offers advice on embracing intimacy.

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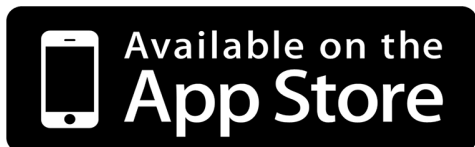


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# Introduction

Have you ever been told that you're too gullible? Do you worry that your open and trusting nature might invite others to take advantage of you? Or maybe you're the opposite, reluctant to trust anyone, including yourself. If you fall into the latter category, there's nothing wrong with you; a lot of people find it difficult to open up and trust others. Whether it's because they fear being hurt or betrayed or because they're struggling with the repercussions of past traumas, trusting others is a common struggle. But that doesn't mean it's okay to let yourself stay there. Because even though it can be difficult to open up, a life without trust will leave you isolated and undermine your relationships. It can even prevent you from pursuing success and growing into your most amazing self!

But fortunately, that's why this book exists. And through the course of this summary, we're going to take a look at a few proven methods that will help you become more comfortable with trusting others. And for starters, we'll look at some topics such as:

- Why your overreactions aren't necessarily "wrong"
- Why you might be misinterpreting your distant partner's signals, and
- Why listening to your breathing can actually boost your self-confidence

# Your Early Childhood Relationships Shape Your Ability to Trust Others

When you meet someone new on a train or at the bus stop, how comfortable do you feel sharing details about your life? Some of us might feel free to chat about everything from our recent divorce to our medical histories while others might feel uncomfortably divulging so much as their usual takeout order. In most cases, no matter what our response is, our childhood experiences are usually responsible for shaping them. That's because children who develop strong bonds with their parents learn to trust more easily since they grow up feeling secure in their sense that the world is a safe place. For example, when a child is scared and her mother comforts her, she learns to trust the mother as a source of safety and security and feel more comfortable with the world in general.

By contrast, children who don't grow up with this type of reassurance or nurturing family bond often struggle with forming close relationships in adulthood because they have a hard time opening up to others and worry that they'll be hurt if they try. And because our bodies remember the physical closeness we experience as children-- the hugs and snuggles and security of a loving embrace-- we can draw on these memories to comfort us in adulthood and remind ourselves that we always have a support system to rely on. That's why it's vital for children to form these bonds. For example, the author clearly remembers that when he was a very small child, his mother, grandmother, and great-aunt came together to give him a bath and play with him every Sunday night. The closeness, laughter, and security they shared stays with him to this day and he often relies on such warm memories to help him through difficult situations in adulthood.

However, Richo asserts that this comes with the equally important caveat that adult authority figures should caution themselves against being overly possessive. An environment in which a child feels smothered can be toxic because it prevents the child from developing a sense of independence. That's why it's vital for parents to relinquish control by healthy degrees as a

child grows older, allowing them space to explore the world, test boundaries, and develop their independent sense of self. Without the freedom to do so, a child can neither grow to emotional maturity or develop a sense of trust in themselves. And this sense of trust is critical for human development, because if you struggle to trust yourself and your own instincts, you definitely won't be able to form healthy bonds with others.

# Healthy Relationships Are Built on Trust

Did you ever watch the movie “Love Story” or hear its classic catchphrase, “Love means never having to say you’re sorry?” The utter fallacy of that line is just one example of the unrealistic, idealized romance that’s depicted on the big screen, and unfortunately, many viewers internalize these values. This is also true with the classic movie trope of lovers rushing into a relationship after one meeting, fueled by plot lines which dictate that nothing ever goes wrong and they all live happily ever after. But in real life, relationships are often very different, as anyone who’s ever compared their relationships to an on-screen rom-com knows.

In real life, relationships are meant to be founded on mutual trust and respect because this-- not a haze of lust or attraction-- is the real secret to finding lasting love. That’s why mature adults know that the early days of seeing a prospective partner should be spent in getting to know them and assessing their trustworthiness. They understand that without this foundation of trust and security, you can’t truly be intimate or feel safe with one another. So, how can you be a trustworthy partner? Well, for starters, you can prioritize your partner’s well-being and make a genuine, consistent effort to keep the relationship passionate and alive.

However, you should also understand that your happiness shouldn’t depend on your partner and you shouldn’t expect them to always remain the same. If we draw on the teachings of Buddhism, we can understand that the world is constantly in flux and that you and your partner will both evolve as a result of that. Accepting this will help you to be happier, not just with your relationship but with your own life and personal development. But it’s also important to remember that a distrustful partner can’t satisfy your needs and, conversely, a partner who doesn’t fulfill your needs cannot be trusted. So, when you enter into any new relationship, you should start by remembering that your fundamental needs are the Five A’s: a partner who pays attention to you, appreciates you, accepts you, shows affection, and allows you the freedom to be yourself.



A partner who doesn't trust others is, sadly, incapable of doing any of these things because they are often too consumed by their own inner conflicts. This might lead her to do the opposite of fulfilling your needs in a relationship, like denying you the freedom to be yourself if she's afraid of being cheated on or abandoned and tries to protect herself through controlling behaviors. Similarly, a partner who doesn't trust himself might think that he's unable to be happy on his own and rely too heavily on a partner by expecting them to keep him pumped up all the time. He might expect more affection than it's even feasible to give, leading to misunderstandings or spiteful behavior when his partner doesn't meet his impossible demands.

## Past Trauma Can Affect Present Relationships

Have you ever overreacted when you observed a certain type of behavior in a partner? Or jumped to conclusions because of something you thought was happening, even if you had no evidence of it? If you have, you're not alone, and you're not unreasonable. That's because your overreactions are more deeply rooted than you realize, even if they have no connection to what's happening in the present moment. Because if you've been hurt in the past-- especially if that hurt stems from some form of childhood trauma-- you might instinctively mistrust people in later life.

So, if you find yourself struggling to trust your new girlfriend or your new colleague at work, it's important to realize that your mistrust might not necessarily stem from them. Rather, it might stem from you. And if, for example, you find yourself getting increasingly anxious or paranoid every time your new girlfriend gets angry, it might not be that she's giving you legitimate reason to worry, but perhaps that you're triggered by memories of a parent who became violent whenever they got angry. A bit of introspection can help you sift through your emotions and determine whether you're responding to real and present stimuli or whether your worries stem from past triggers.

However, triggers aren't the only cause of trust issues in relationships. "Do-it-yourself" pain is a common one and many people are susceptible to it without realizing. Quite simply, this form of pain occurs when you engage in excessively negative self-talk, like telling yourself that no one will ever love you again after a partner breaks up with you. It's easy to see how this is both unnecessary and unhelpful because breakups are tough enough on their own, but the idea that you'll never find love again is simply untrue. And as tempting as it may be to indulge in nihilistic thoughts, telling yourself lies of this nature only makes the situation worse.

And while you're learning to stop lying to yourself, it's also important that you make a concentrated effort to avoid lying to your partner. Fear,

mistrust, and past trauma makes this tendency all too common as well; even if you don't intend to hurt your partner, we often lie out of fear or to keep someone else happy or because we're afraid that our real feelings might hurt others. That's one reason why people sometimes stay in abusive relationships, even when it's to their detriment. This problem can be exacerbated if that person has a history of pain and abuse, especially stemming from their childhood, as this may have conditioned them to feel that it's normal to be treated cruelly. So, they might unintentionally lie to themselves and believe that it's best for them to stay in that relationship. Likewise, if you're struggling with substance abuse, you might be tempted to lie to your partner and tell them that you haven't relapsed when you have. This might be for seemingly innocent motives, like fear of disappointing your partner or making them sad, but that still doesn't mean it's a good decision.

## Self-Acceptance is a Form of Trust Too

Would you be comfortable trusting someone who wasn't honest with you about who they are? Probably not, right? So, why are we comfortable lying about ourselves? Although we may not realize it, refusing to accept ourselves for who we are is another form of lying, and if we're not honest about ourselves, it means we can't be honest with ourselves, and this ultimately prevents us from growing. So, if you want to truly open up and allow yourself to get close to others, you first need to embark on a journey on self-discovery. Start by acknowledging and accepting your own feelings--about what you want, who you are, and even those things you'd rather not admit to yourself. Although suppressing your feelings might bring short-term relief, ultimately it only brings you long-term pain. Not to mention the fact that you can't truly grow if you don't know who you are.

Likewise, once you open the door to being honest with yourself, you can acknowledge what you really want out of life and go after it! You might also find that your pursuit of honesty will lead to other unexpected benefits, like a sense of holistic tranquility and peace. That's because denying your negative emotions doesn't really get rid of them; it just suppresses them until they manifest in other ways. After all, how many times have we all felt a nagging tension headache or a perpetual knot in our stomachs because we were sad, stressed, or worried about the outcome of a certain event? But when we acknowledge these emotions, we give them the freedom to dissipate naturally, which means the tension will disappear.

And the more you practice being honest with yourself, the more you'll find that you're not simply cultivating a deeper awareness of your emotions, you're getting to know your body better as well. This can be surprisingly helpful because being in touch with your body can help you cope with stressful situations more easily. As we discussed earlier, your body is a physical reflection of the psychological anxiety you're experiencing, That's why you might start to shake or your palms might get sweaty; your heart rate might increase as you struggle to breathe. But if you learn to focus on

what your body is saying, you can recognize these physiological cues as they set in and find new ways to soothe your mind and body before your stress accelerates. Remembering to focus on your breathing is key because breathing exercises will help you center yourself and address your thoughts calmly and objectively with a clear mind.

## Practicing Mindfulness Can Open New Doors

One highly effective way to combat mental and physical stress is practicing mindfulness. In a sense, mindfulness is a supercharged version of the breathing exercises we referenced in the previous chapter because it invites you to develop your clarity and self-confidence by focusing on your breathing. You can dive into mindfulness by taking a few slow, deep breaths and concentrating only on the sensation of your breath as you inhale and exhale. As you direct your focus toward your breathing, allow your thoughts to pass through your mind without judgment. This is a critical difference because your attention remains on your breathing instead of ping-ponging between your anxious thoughts. It also removes the element of negative self-talk which frequently accompanies our internal monologues and thus encourages us to confront our thoughts in a new, objective light.

You can also apply these same principles in other moments of stress by making a conscious effort to stop what you're doing. For example, if you're sad because you're struggling with a loss that's hurt you deeply, you can use mindfulness to develop your sense of inner strength and overcome your pain. Rather than fighting or dismissing your thoughts, you can use mindfulness to acknowledge your thoughts and let them pass without judgment. Repeating this exercise will also help you to understand that these thoughts are temporary and as such, you shouldn't allow your brain to permanently dwell on them.

You can help yourself move forward by reinforcing positive messages or encouraging helpful self-talk. Positive affirmations are beneficial because they not only help you take your mind off your pain, they can also boost your self-confidence! That's because your perspective on any situation has a huge impact on your emotional response to it. So, whenever you're confronted with a negative situation, you should try to remember that a positive outlook is key. For example, let's say you're nervous about checking your work email because you're expecting some bad news. In situations like this, it might be tempting to tell yourself something like, "Everything is

going wrong, everything always goes wrong, and I can't handle this," or, "I don't want to know what comes next."

But you'll be happier if your internal monologue says something more like, "It may be hard right now, but everybody goes through tough times. I've survived difficult circumstances before and I can get through this too." When you tell yourself this, you're acknowledging your stress instead of repressing it and you're offering yourself a message of hope that can help you power through the tough time. Doing this consistently will remind you that you have the strength to get through any hardship you might face and that you are stronger than you think. So, don't give up!

## Final Summary

It can be difficult to trust others, especially if you weren't able to form secure and nurturing bonds in childhood. But developing your sense of trust and daring to open up is crucial to your own health and personal development as well as the formation of your bonds with others. So, if you want to strengthen your ability to trust, it's best to start by being honest with yourself. Learning to accept yourself for who you are and acknowledging your emotions without judging them can help you become more comfortable in your own skin.

You can also use mindfulness to develop your self-awareness and, in turn, acknowledge past traumas or the tendencies to indulge in "do-it-yourself" pain which might be holding you back. As you understand more about these emotional pitfalls, you'll be able to recognize when your misgivings stem from real and present external stimuli and when you're inclined to distrust others because of your past triggers. It can also be helpful to remember the Five A's we should all keep in mind when looking for a partner. (And don't forget to make an effort at being that kind of partner yourself!) These strategies-- along with practicing positive affirmations, eliminating negative self-talk, and engaging in breathing exercises-- can help you dare to trust and open doors to new and healthy relationships.





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