

WHAT'S YOUR TRUST FACTOR?

DIRECTIONS: Place an "X" on the traffic light color that best answers each question.



When a friend reveals personal information, do you immediately tell others what your friend just told you?

what kind of person you are. Most often people will trust those they know who "put the best construction" on everything. If you're a person who has the reputation of forgiving, listening and offering the benefit of the doubt, you'll be like a magnet. Those positive qualities will attract others to share themselves with you.

When a friend shares personal information, assume that what's said is meant for you alone.

In trust, Brian told Jill he thought his dad had a job offer. It meant their family might be moving across the country. But Brian's dad didn't get the job, and for weeks Brian battled the rumor of his move. Understandably, Brian was hurt that Jill had shared what he considered a secret.

If people want others to know about themselves, they will take the responsibility of telling. If you feel a strong need to relay information ask permission from the source.



In conversations, do you stretch the facts to make stories juicier and more exciting?

If a friend says, "Mike is so cute," do you send Cupid-like rumblings saying your friend really likes Mike and wants to go out with him? It won't be long before the word is out: You're someone who blows things out of proportion. Before people confide in you again, they will hesitate because you might exaggerate whatever they say.



Do you find yourself complaining and saying negative things about others?

Constantly casting a dark shadow on conversations reflects



Do you jump to conclusions without carefully listening?

*Can your friends trust you?
Take this simple test.*

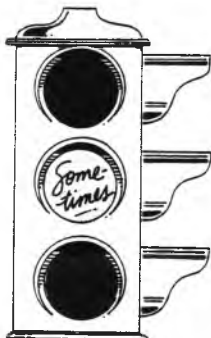
Assumptions can get you into trouble. Feelings can be easily misunderstood. Restate and check what you're hearing. Don't be afraid to ask your friend what you think she's just said. Simply ask, "Do I hear you saying . . . ?" and she can correct you if you're wrong.

Accurate communication is crucial for building trust.



When talking with friends, do you often whisper and exclude others from your conversations?

If your friendly lunchroom conversations turn to touchy subjects, learn to reserve them for more private settings. Shifty glances and hushed voices signal mistrust. Others begin thinking: "Maybe they're talking about me. I wonder why? What did I do to make them talk about me?" Even though they might be mistaken, it's easy for others to jump to unhealthy conclusions about you and your trust if you act that way.



When coming home late, do you sneak around and cover up your whereabouts?

Parents will treat you more like an adult when you build trust with them. Two or three times of your parents' discovering who you *really* were with and where you *really* were will shatter the delicate foundation of parental trust.

Darlene learned the hard way. She started hanging around a group of friends who were into drinking and partying. Darlene knew her parents wouldn't let her go to Friday night's party, so she

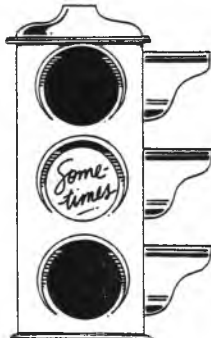
told them she was doing something else. Later her parents found out she'd lied. Their trust level sank.

Be honest with your mom and dad. They'll appreciate and celebrate your maturity. If you feel like you must be secretive at home, ask yourself why. Re-evaluate your behavior and be honest with yourself. Are you secretive because you're doing hurtful things? Let your sneakiness be a signal for potential personal change.



When asked about certain things, do you fib and tell little white lies?

People grow in trust when they learn that you're honest and not afraid of risking the truth. But lies have a way of haunting you. When people discover contradictions and falsehoods, they have the distinct impression that you can't be trusted. Practice being honest, straightforward and open.



When you're with someone, do you think he or she mistrusts you?

Making assumptions about mistrust breeds mistrust. If you wonder about and question people's motives for friendship, you sow the seeds of mistrust.

Friends *will* trust you if you truly love and care for them. Because of your love, they'll know you always want the best for them and never want to hurt them unnecessarily.

Trust grows out of love. Relationships bound in love automatically create trust as a byproduct.



Do you find it difficult to care about friends who confide in you?

Believe in your friends. Accept the fact that they're confiding in you. The more you feel that your friends trust you to keep their secrets, the more you'll do just that! Knowing they're counting on you helps you be a more faithful friend.

**Now count the green traffic lights.
TOTAL:**



If you have all (or almost all) green lights, congratulations! Keep up the good work! You're a trusted friend and someone people will seek out.

**Count the yellow traffic lights.
TOTAL:**



If most of your lights are yellow, reread the questions. Think about some of the times you said and did these things. Is there a pattern to these situations or are they isolated instances? Work at changing any caution areas in your life.

**Count the red traffic lights.
TOTAL:**



Warning! If all (or almost all) of your lights are red, you may discover your friends abandoning you because they can't trust you. Carefully work on these behaviors. Be aware of your actions and pray for God's special help in building trustworthy relationships. ☐