

TRUSTING YOURSELF THE CONQUEST OF SELF-ESTEEM

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According to Umberto Galimberti's Dictionary of Psychology, trust is *the reassuring state that derives from the persuasion of the reliability of the surrounding world, perceived as being well disposed towards the subject.*

Let's try to imagine ourselves at the back of the supermarket checkout, or sitting in our armchair at the cinema. Who is behind us? A stranger, or maybe someone we know only by sight? We would entrust our back or not for a "touch" just more than random ... and why?

Trusting is always a risk, a bet. If we could trust everyone and always, trust would no longer have value, it would be "inflated". And then, can the fact that we trust someone, even if motivatedly, protect us from his possible error? Although if in total good faith, an error is always possible. So, what would happen to the error in which a trusted person can fall ... would we deny him our trust from now on? And finally, how important is the way, the attitude with which the error is faced or its eventual reiteration?

In fact, while the child trusts because he has no choice, the adult can choose drawing from his own experience. That is, to one's awareness of the type of patterns, of introjected relationship models.

After Freud's *innatism*, we witness to the passage from the EGO psychology - based on the "drive / defense" model - to that of the "relationship" as it is the same model that structures the drives, the needs, the desires, as it is well represented in the *Theory of object relations*.⁽¹⁾

According to Erikson (and then Balint, Winnicott), **basic trust** begins to be structured already during breastfeeding - but today we know that it begins also before, at

an intrauterine level: phase in which the soul asserts its right to be there, to "Incarnate" in *one's own body* that is accepted into the world, which is welcomed by the surrounding environment, acquiring the security that allows him, in opposition to what he feels to be reliable, to recognize evil and negativity. This is why anyone who receives this kind of trust from the child receives a precious gift. But also a great responsibility.

In this period, the presence of traumatic circumstances can affect, in fact, the basic trust with consequent repercussions against a depressive or neurotic-impulsive background in adult psychology. Betraying the trust of a child is "polluting" the meaning of our future. On the other hand, honoring the gift constitutes a real "developmental ecology".

In adolescent psychology, the theme of trust / mistrust is accompanied by that of the friend / foe. In other words, there is a significant presence of what Renzo Carli calls the "collusive myth" of the group, that is the symbolization of the "other from oneself" according to the code and the language of *familism*, that is the negation of the stranger and the affirmation of the 'friend / foe, through an emotional mode of totally self-reported relationship (e.g. in the school class the boys-teacher relationship is turned into a "parent-child" clash).⁽²⁾

Furthermore, trust has its roots in our biological structure of mammals. Those who are more confident are better in health, their defense system is not always alerted, it is not hyper-adrenalinic, he does not risk autoimmune diseases. That is, there is an objective evaluation of the external world, free from subjective projections, because there is a self-evaluation, an attribution of the "sense of self-worth for oneself and the others" for the person, also through the promotion and "playful" training "in the group to which they belong: small conflicts, discussions, comparisons in which humor and self-irony lighten the demanding task of individuation, are important evidence of growth for self-recognition as a subject.

The purpose of the family, its only "product" - always according to Renzo Carli - should be to facilitate the release of its younger members from the family itself. But this is not always the case; on the contrary, the

rule seems to have become that of looking with distrust not only to the outside world but, even before, to his own creative resources to face and resolve conflicts and “problems”. It often seems that parents, not trusting the abilities of their adolescent children to face the extra-family experience (and thus expose themselves to the consequent risks), actually doubt the instrumentation that they themselves have provided. As if they were continually showing them a “toolbox”, but without allowing them to take advantage of it and experience it and testing its effectiveness. So that they then acquire mastery and skill in use, but also the responsibility to decide which “elements” deemed outdated or inadequate are possibly to be set aside.

What are the personal relationships that we remember with more joy? What are those really positive for us? Perhaps those in which someone gave us confidence.

Mistrust creates distance, trust intimacy, knowledge, learning, structuring and enrichment of the personality, sense of the future and possibilities.

Self-confidence and therefore “self-esteem” arise from the knowledge of one’s own conscious and unconscious components, which constitute the personality. This is why we can consider **self-esteem as a process** in which we “gain” knowledge and mastery of our “inner realm”. And in this process *risk and error* are fundamental. The first to test our courage and our capacity for discernment; the second to acquire important information about ourselves and the outside world. Estimating, evaluating, observing ourselves trying to identify and recognize old judging or penalizing modalities, means discovering our “internal observer”, the Ego, as a reflection of the higher Self and therefore the reflection of an unconditional, accepting, welcoming love, not “self-justifying” but self-aware of the lights and shadows that make up our personality.

The knowledge, the evaluation “in itself” of the value of complexity, of that “constellation of representations of the Self” observed by Ogden⁽³⁾, but then better defined as “multiple soul” and “subpersonality” by Roberto Assagioli, is the assumption of the process of Psychosynthesis that recognizes the indispensable existence of these diversified groups of personality

around a unifying center, around that energetic “magnet” that is the Ego, a constant element but all to be experienced in the process of personal growth. Being able to “play on several tables”, knowing how to manage one’s existential anxiety distributing it in more forms, is what describes a health strategy not only in our “chronological” adolescence, but in the whole journey of development and growth of our personality. Conversely, the reduction and withdrawal in rigid and mono-oriented models often indicates the pathological discomfort.

Trust is also a very powerful “medicine”. In the helping relationship and in psychotherapy it is the premise for the success of every therapeutic process.

The “therapist or counselor-client” alliance is based on trust, on the attribution to the other (therapist or counselor) by the person in difficulty of the “positive” contents of oneself that cannot yet be recognized “for themselves”, receiving back the confidence in the possibility of growth, of evolution, starting from the recognition of one’s personal value by the other. In the process of the aid relationship, together with the various phases or stages related to the progressive mutations of the conditions in which this relationship takes place, the “scope” and the “quality” of trust must also change. From the initial one, mainly projective - both as expectations / pretensions and as total / magical attribution - we can gradually reach a motivated, disenchanted trust, we could say “disidentified”, which considers the other no longer as a phantasmal and absolute entity (the “good” mother), provider of unconditional love and acceptance, but as a person, other than oneself, “You”, with all merits and faults. If this happens, it means that both participants in the relationship have become free and aware subjects, freely interdependent wills that become available at any further step on the ground of self-realization and mutual recognition and support.

Trust is also letting go, abandoning oneself to Life, getting out of the illusion of being able to control the whole external world, to pay more attention to our inner world and to the resources of trust, courage and creativity in the good, which represent the full manifestation of Transpersonal will. A dynamic manifestation that takes the form of the good, strong and wise energy of the Ego or personal Self.

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