REACH OUT

FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

Week 3: Trustworthiness

Imagine that you have a job working at a retail store (for some of you, this may not be far from the truth), and your boss has asked you to watch the store for a few minutes while she goes to the bank. While she's gone, you notice a pair of shoes that you've had your eye on for several weeks, and you decide that now is your chance to take them. There aren't any cameras, that you know of, and no one would really notice. In fact, the store could just write off the loss, and no one would really be hurt by the loss. So if the situation seems so perfect, why is it still a bad idea to steal the shoes?

It all comes down to being trustworthy. If you are the kind of person who seeks opportunities when no one is looking to do things that you know are wrong, you are damaging your trustworthiness. You may think that if you don't get caught, it's ok, but that's not really the point. Trustworthy people are people who act the same way alone as they do when people are around. They act with integrity. People in authority know when a person is trustworthy, because no matter how risk-free a situation may seem, there is always a pretty good chance of getting noticed or caught. If you are a trustworthy person, you will be given greater and greater privileges and responsibilities. The freedoms you can receive by being trustworthy are far greater than the small payoffs you may see in risking your integrity in moments when you think no one is looking. Plus, you never know who else you may be hurting by acting dishonestly.

Let's step back into the story above. A week after you steal the shoes, your boss enters the room in tears. When you ask her what is wrong, she tells you that she has been fired because of too many inventory losses. She says that she can't explain how the stock of shoes didn't match the inventory, but store management decided that she wasn't trustworthy if inventory was going missing during her shifts. She has taken the blame for your dishonesty.

Challenge: Trustworthiness

Every action has consequences, good or bad. Think of something *good* you've done, and make a list of positive consequences that came out of that action. How did doing that good thing affect the way that people treated you? Now think of something you've done that was *wrong*, and make a list of possible consequences for that action. Share your observations with your partner. <u>Work hard to be the same person when you're alone and outside of the department as you are when you're in the department and in front of the director.</u>