

# The Emotional Bank Account

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An emotional bank account is a metaphor that describes the amount of trust that has been built up in a relationship. It's the feeling of safeness you have with another. If I make enough deposits with you through courtesy, kindness, honesty and keeping my commitments to you, I build up a reserve. Your trust becomes higher and I can call upon that trust if I need to.

When the trust is high, communication is easy, instant and effective. Here are Six Major Deposits:

## *Understanding the individual*

One person's mission is another person's minutia. To make a deposit, what is important to another person must be as important to you as the other person is to you.

## *Attending to the seemingly insignificant*

Kindnesses and courtesies are so important. Forms of disrespect make large withdrawals. In relationships, the things that can seem insignificant to you can count for others.

## *Keeping commitments*

Keeping a commitment is a major deposit; breaking one is a major withdrawal. In fact there's probably no larger withdrawal than to make a promise that's important to someone and then not to come through.

## *Clarifying expectations*

The cause of many relationship difficulties is often rooted in conflicting or ambiguous expectations around roles and goals. Unclear expectations will lead to misunderstanding, disappointment and withdrawals of trust. Many expectations are implicit and the deposit is to make the expectations clear and explicit in the beginning. This takes a real investment of time and effort up front, but saves great amounts of time and effort later. When expectations are not clear and shared, simple misunderstandings become compounded, turning into personality clashes and communication breakdowns.

## *Showing personal integrity*

Lack of integrity can undermine almost any other effort to create high trust accounts. It goes beyond honesty. Integrity is conforming to the reality of our words - keeping promises and fulfilling expectations. One way of manifesting integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present.

## *Apologising sincerely when you make a withdrawal*

Great deposits come in the sincere words - "I was wrong", "I showed you no respect", "I'm sorry". It takes a great deal of character strength to apologise. A person must have a deep sense of security to genuinely apologise. It is one thing to make a mistake, and quite another not to admit it.