

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

March 1, 2020

Spiritual Ponderings

Trust

Life is like a rollercoaster in the sense that life seems to have within itself a lot of twists and turns that keep things interesting. There is something about life that is both exciting and scary at the same time – much like riding a rollercoaster (or at least I have been told since I am too scared to ride a rollercoaster). Despite my fear of rollercoasters, I do think riding a rollercoaster is a great image of life. When a person gets into a rollercoaster, he or she is trusting three people. They are trusting the architect who designed the rollercoaster, the person who seatbelts them in, and the mechanic who is working behind the scenes to make sure everything is working correctly. In a similar way, we need to trust God the Father, who designed our life, The Son who belts us in through the Sacraments, and The Holy Spirit who is like the mechanic working behind the scenes making sure the Father's plan will come about.

The following quote from Stephen Covey really caught my attention: "Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships." Faith life is all about developing a relationship with God so developing my trust in God can only make my relationship with God better. A few months ago, I was looking for a spiritual book to read and I came across Stephen M.R. Covey's book called *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. I found some great insights into the idea of trust and ways to improve my relationship with God. I would like to share with you some of the insights that I have gained from reading this book. Quotes from the book will be in bold my commentary in normal type. Stephen M.R. Covey is the son of Stephen R. Covey

There is one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, team family, organization, nation, economy, and civilization throughout the world—one thing which, if removed, will destroy the most powerful government, the most successfully business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strong character, the deepest love.

On the other hand, if developed and leveraged, that one thing has the potential to create unparallel success and prosperity in every dimension of life. Yet, is the least understood, most neglected, and most underestimated possibility of our time.

That one thing is trust.

If we look at the story of Adam and Eve, we see that the first sin was committed because Adam and Eve did not trust that God wanted what was best for them. They believed that God was holding back on them despite the fact that God had given them everything. Once they doubted God, great damage occurred in the relationship between God and human beings. Jesus brings about salvation in some ways by demonstrating trust in the Father's will.

Every relationship needs the people in the relationship to learn to trust each other. Trust is definitely one thing that separates good relationships from bad ones. I think it is safe to say the more I trust someone the deeper our relationship can go. If I don't trust you then I will not share myself with you and therefore our relationship will stall. If you do not trust me then our relationship will also stall.

Trusts impacts us 24.7, 365 days a year. It undergirds and affects the quality of every relationship, every communication, every work project, every business venture, every effort in which we are engaged. It changes the quality of every present moment and alters the trajectory and outcome of every future moment of our lives—both personally and professionally.

Imagine how different our world would be today if everyone trusted each other and everyone was worthy of trust. A world without lies would also be a world of peace. I also have to admit to myself that every time that I sin, I do so because I do not trust God. I do not believe that God wants what is best for me and therefore I do things my ways instead of God's way. If I trusted that God knew what was best for me, I would always do what God wanted me to do and thus I would never sin. Instead, I sometimes think God is using me and therefore I rebel against God's loving guidance. Mary and Joseph trusted in the Lord and Jesus came into the world. Zachariah did not trust and he was left speechless.

We can increase trust—much faster than we might think—and doing so will have a huge impact, both in the quality of our lives and in the results we're able to achieve.

In becoming a more trustworthy person and looking at what it means to be trustworthy, I think we can improve our relationship with God and with others.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

March 8, 2020

Spiritual Ponderings

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"A team is not a group of people that work together. A team is a group of people that trust each other." - Simon Sinek. Learning to build trust with others will therefore help us build trust with God and thus help us to make God and us a great team. For insights in how to develop trust we will turn to Stephen M.R. Covey's book called *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. Quotes from the book will be in bold my commentary in normal type.

The difference between a high-trust and low-trust relationship is palpable! Take communication. In a high-trust relationship, you can say the wrong thing, and people will get your meaning. In a low-trust relationship, you can be very measured, even precise, and they'll still misinterpret you.

The longer, I know someone the more I am willing to trust them. When my trust in God is high living my faith seems to be easier than the times, I doubt God's love or God's existence. I am also willing to work harder for people I trust than for people I do not trust.

Here's a simple formula that will enable you to take trust from an intangible and unquantifiable variable to an indispensable factor that is both tangible and quantifiable. The formula is based on this critical insight: Trust always affects two outcomes—speed and cost. When trust goes down, speed will also go down and costs will go up..

↓Trust = ↓Speed ↑Cost

When trust goes up, speed will also go up and costs will go down.

↑Trust = ↑Speed ↓Cost

It's that simple, that real, that predictable. Let me share a couple of examples.

Stephen goes on to give the example of how trust has played a role in the air travel. Before 9/11 there was a high level of trust and people could speed right through the airport but after 9/11 moving through the airport takes longer because there is a lower level of trust.

Before reading this book, I never saw trust as having any economic or financial value. It makes sense though. Time is money and thus the quicker we can do things the better. I now think of this every time I turn my computer on and how all the software programs that start up to protect my computer takes so long because we cannot trust people not to invent malware.

When a priest enters into a parish for the first time he is encouraged not to change too much too quickly. He should instead spend his time connecting with people and building up trust. I am sure that this advice is good advice in the work place and when learning how to live with new family members (i.e. in-laws).

"Our distrust is very expensive." – Ralph Waldo Emerson.

How much money do we spend on security today because we cannot trust people? How much time (and time is money) do we spend trying to be safe because we do not trust each other? We have security cameras, metal detectors, etc. All of which costs money.

I know of leading organization who ask their employees directly the following simple question in formal. 360-degree feedback processes: Do you trust your boss?" These companies have learned that the answer is more predictive of team and organizational performance than any other questions they might ask.

Do you trust God? This one question makes one of the best examination of consciences. The story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis is a story of trust. When Abraham and Sarah do things God's way good things happen to them. When

they don't trust God and do things their way bad things happen. The more they get to know God and see that God keeps His promises the more they trust Him. The ultimate sign of this test is the story of Abraham willingness to sacrifice Isaac.

Once you really understand the hard, measurable economics of trust, it's like putting on a new pair of glasses. Everywhere you look you can see the impact—at work, at home, in every relationship, in every effort. You can begin to see the incredible difference high-trust-relationship can make in every dimension of life.

The Israelites pay a high price for not trusting God by having to wander forty years in the desert because they did not trust in God despite the fact that God had led them out of slavery. If they would have trusted God they would have been in the Promise Land much sooner.

On a personal level, high-trust individuals are more likely to be promoted, make more money, receive the best opportunities and have more.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

March 15, 2020

Spiritual Ponderings

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“Anyone who doesn't take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either.” - Albert Einstein. As we continue our reflections on the idea of trust and how it can impact our relationships with others but also have an impact on our spiritual lives, I would like to remind you that quotes from Stephen M.R. Covey's book *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. will be in bold my commentary in normal type.

In his book Stephen M.R. Covey has the following chart that helps his reader understand some of what he calls the myths surrounding the idea of trust.

Myth	Truth
Trust is soft	Trust is hard, real, and quantifiable. It measurably affects both speed and cost.
Trust is slow	Nothing is as fast as the speed of trust.
Trust is built solely on integrity.	Trust is a function of both character (which includes integrity) and competence.
You either have trust or you don't	Trust can be both created and destroyed
Once lost, trust cannot be restored	Though difficult, in most cases lost trust can be restored
You can't teach trust	Trust can be effectively taught and learned, and in can become a leverageable, strategic advantage.
Trusting people is too risky	Not trusting people is a greater risk
Trust can only be built face-to-face	Trust can be built on virtual teams and in digital environments
Trust is established one person at a time.	Establishing trust with one establishes trust with the many.

When reviewing the above chart from the book, I can see how I often believe the myths about trust when I am only a surface level of thinking. As I dig deeper, I begin to see the truth about trust. For example, I at first thought that you could not measure trust, but now I can see where I am more productive in environments where I feel trusted because I am not being slowed down by worry. It is almost like doing a self-fulfilling prophecy. Another example is I always thought learning to trust someone was a slow process, but with self-reflection, I discover that I often trust people quite easily.

If we have no one that we can trust in life, we will eventually go crazy from paranoia so it is a greater risk not to trust someone than it is to

Once again, I affirm that nothing is as fast as the speed of trust. Nothing is as fulfilling as a relationship of trust. Nothing is as inspiring as an offering of trust. Nothing is as profitable as the economics of trust. Nothing has more influence than a reputation of trust.

Pope John Paul II pointed out that the most used phrase in the Bible was “Be Not Afraid.” Scott Hahn in his writings talks about how the words “Lord be with you” are some of the scariest words in the Bible because it means God has a mission for you to accomplish. They are also some of the most comforting words in the Bible because God is not leaving us to do this alone. We can TRUST that He will be with us also.

When I am honest with myself, there are a lot of times that I slow down things I am doing because I do not trust God to complete them in a way that I find satisfying. I am also amazed at how quickly many of the saints responded to God’s call. I think it is safe to say that they had a higher level of trust in God than I do at times.

Then my father said something very profound. He said, “Now you need to know that when you take this job, I don’t do it anymore. It’s your job. It’s called a stewardship. Stewardship means “a job with a trust.”

Maybe the reason the king was so mad in the parable of the story of talents is because the last one who buried his talent show know trust. He therefore did not only fail to make any sort of investment but He also broke the trust that the king had in him. The man with the ten talents and four talents at the end showed that they trustworthy in small matters so now the king could trust them in larger matters.

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“If we do not fill our mind with prayer, it will fill itself with anxieties, worries, temptations, resentments, and unwelcome memories.” - Scott Hahn. Prayer is building a relationship with God and all relationships need trust to grow and so let us continue to reflect on the idea of trust. Quotes from Stephen M.R. Covey’s book *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. will be in bold my commentary in normal type.

“As my father so eloquently taught, “If you think the problem is out there, that very thought is the problem.”

As we eventually taught the people on each level of this major corporation, your boss, your division leader, your CEO, your board, your spouse, your children, your friends, your associates may all have problems as far as trust (or anything else) is concerned. But that does not mean that you are powerless! In fact, you probably have no idea how powerful you can be in changing the level of trust in any relationship if you know how to work “From the inside out.”

The only person that I can control in life is myself. All I can do is change the way I respond to the way people act toward me. Stephen talks about how we get to choose how we see the world, what we say, and how we behave.

Personal growth requires us to realize that we cannot control what people throw at us but we can control how we react toward someone. I cannot stop someone from throwing an insult at me but I can either take the insult to heart or dismiss it and not let it bother me. It takes time and practice but eventually you can learn to identify your thoughts and choose an appropriate to react instead of just reacting.

Leadership is getting results in a way that inspires trust... The means are as important as the ends. How you go about achieving results is as important as the results themselves, because when you establish trust, you increase your ability to get results the next time. And there’s always a next time. To get things done in a way that destroy trust is not only shortsighted and counterproductive; it is ultimately unsustainable.

How one achieves his or her goal is just as important as what the goal is. In Church’s morality the ends never justify the means. We are called to be a people of integrity.

“Trust is absolutely key to long-term success. – Jim Burke, Former Chairman and CEO, of Johnson and Johnson.

I would say that being trustworthy is absolutely key to ETERNAL success. In heaven, we will not be able to lie or exaggerate our accomplishments. We should therefore prepare ourselves for heaven by accepting who we are right now and try to be a trustworthy person and not someone who exaggerates his or her accomplishments.

Credibility is a leader's currency. With it, he or she is solvent; without it, he or she is bankrupt. – John Maxwell.

My first pastor always encouraged me to “earn” my blue chips. I have come to discover the more people get to know me the more they learn to trust me and so I try to take me time to allow people to get to know me and so I do a lot of listening sessions and not town hall meetings.

Stephen then lays out four core aspects of being a credible person:

First, that you are a person of integrity—that you are honest and congruent, that you have a reputation for being truthful and that you would not lie.

Second, that you have good intent—that you're not trying to deceive or protect anyone, that you don't have any hidden motive or agenda that would color your testimony.

Third, that your credentials are excellent, that you do, indeed, have expertise knowledge, skill, and capability in the area in which you are called to testify.

And fourth, that you have a good track record, that you have demonstrated your capabilities effectively in other situations in the past, that you produce results and that there is good reason to believe that you will do so now. I cannot say one thing and do another. My actions and words have to line up otherwise I will be called a liar and no one will trust me or want to follow me.

When we tell someone, we want to help then but in reality, we are using them or distracting them it is called manipulation and no one likes to be manipulated.

We must be honest about are abilities otherwise we will overexaggerate them too much and destroy our credibility.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

March 29, 2020

Spiritual Ponderings

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Let us renew our trust in god, and go forward without fear. - Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln had much to fear as he was becoming President of the United States and somehow his trust in God allowed him to keep moving forward. Let us continue our reflections on trust today. Quotes from Stephen M.R. Covey's book *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. will be in bold my commentary in normal type.

Stephen M.R. Covey lays out what he calls five waves of trust. They are self-trust, relationship-trust, organizational-trust, market-trust, and societal-trust. Each of these waves build upon another so when you become more trustworthy in one wave, you will become more trustworthy in the others. The opposite is also true.

This is why the Church is in such a bad situation right now. A few individuals proved to not be trustworthy and their untrustworthiness rippled throughout the five waves of trust to where the Church as a whole has a credibility problem. The only way to fix this is for individuals to prove themselves trustworthy again and see the ripple reversed.

The problem in organizations, however, is that many “ethics” solutions focus on compliance. The compliance definition of “ethics” is not one of integrity or intergatedness; it is a water-down, devalued definition that essentially means “follow the rules.” Ethics training, therefore, is often focused exclusively on conformity to Sarbanes-Oxley and other regulatory and rules-based legislation—and not on clarifying values and fostering integrity to those values and to enduring principles.

Human beings might be capable of determining what is lawful and unlawful they cannot determine what is moral and immoral. Only God can decide that. The Pharisees are examples of people who thought they could treat others how ever they wanted as long as that they obeyed laws of God.

As Albert Camus said, “Integrity has no need of rules.”

A person who has integrity will always do what is right no matter if it lawful or not. I love the following story about Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Why Desmond Tutu Became an Anglican Priest

All of us have heard of Desmond Tutu, but few of us will know who Trevor Huddleston is. Yet without Trevor Huddleston there may have been no anti-apartheid leader named Tutu.

Asked by the BBC to identify the defining moment in his life Desmond Tutu spoke of the day he and his mother were walking down the street. Tutu was nine years old. A tall white man dressed in a black suit came towards them. In the days of apartheid, when a black person and a white person met while walking on a footpath, the black person was expected to step into the gutter to allow the white person to pass and nod their head as a gesture of respect. But this day, before a young Tutu and his mother could step off the sidewalk the white man stepped off the sidewalk and, as my mother and I passed, tipped his hat in a gesture of respect to her!

The white man was Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest who was bitterly opposed to apartheid. It changed Tutu's life. When his mother told him that Trevor Huddleston had stepped off the sidewalk because he was a man of God Tutu found his calling. "When she told me that he was an Anglican priest I decided there and then that I wanted to be an Anglican priest too. And what is more, I wanted to be a man of God" said Tutu.

Huddleston later became a mentor to Desmond Tutu and his commitment to the equality of all human beings due to their creation in God's image a key driver in Tutu's opposition to apartheid.

Source: This story has been widely reported including by Tutu himself in a 2003 interview with the BBC and in Tutu's Nobel Prize ceremony.

Trevor Huddleston gesture of respect for Desmond's mother was not lawful but it was something that showed he was a man of integrity.

How many of Church would be fulfilled at all time if we but were all people of integrity.