

How Do I Know My Partner Will be Faithful?



Trust in a relationship is key to its success. Couples can create trust through sharing varied experiences. Most people do not automatically trust someone they do not know. They determine trust by giving a little of it at the beginning of the relationship, observing behavior, and then giving or rescinding it based on their perception of the person's behavior. For intimate partners to progress toward feeling fully secure in the longevity of a relationship, fundamental traits should be exhibited. Those traits are predictability and dependability, which lead to faith in the survival of the relationship (Zak et al., 1998).

Predictability means that in any given situation, you have an idea of how your partner will respond. Zak et al. (1998) suggest that this knowledge is gained by a series of observations and behavioral responses. As a partner follows through with what they said they would do, the other member of the relationship can begin to determine whether or not there is consistency in their behavior. This idea, the feeling as if we know what to expect, is one way in which couples can build trust. Conversely, if a partner shows a lack of consistency in what they say and do, then this can erode the base foundation

of a trusting relationship. Once predictability is established, Zak et al. (1998), propose that a couple can move towards establishing dependability.

Dependability in a relationship connotes surety that you can count on your partner to be reliable and trustworthy. This includes being willing to admit mistakes and always being truthful, even in your interactions with others. Saying what you mean and meaning what you say is part of being truthful. However, there may be times in which your partner needs to make changes to plans. Their willingness to communicate with you about the change is what makes the difference.

It is important to note that our own past experiences can influence how we perceive behaviors. A breach of trust in a past relationship can color the way we interpret behaviors in the present. Therefore, open communication about your thoughts and feelings is vital to establishing a trusting relationship.

Use the following questions to explore trust in your intimate relationship.

- Does my partner keep promises?
- Does my partner tell me about needed changes to a plan?
- More often than not, is my partner's behavior in our relationship positive?
- Do I know what to expect from my partner in most situations?
- Do I feel physically, mentally, and emotionally safe with my partner? Why?

If you are still uncertain as to whether or not you can trust your partner, I would encourage you to explore your past experiences, behaviors that cause you concern, and why they are of concern. Talk with your partner about your concerns, and if you do not feel comfortable discussing these things

with him, then seek out a licensed therapist to help you explore your experiences and thoughts.

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References

- Zak, A. M., Gold, J. A., Ryckman, R. M., & Lenney, E. (1998). Assessments of trust in intimate relationships and the self-perception process. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 138(2), 217–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224549809600373>