Who do you trust at work and who trusts you? By inviting readers to answer these two questions, authors Galford and Drapeau get their arms around the slippery yet strategic dimension of trust in organizations. The Trusted Leader is grounded in their research and experience in executive development. The authors define three areas of trust, including strategic trust (assurance the organization is doing the right things), organizational trust (belief in the way things are being done), and personal trust (confidence between leader and employees). These ideas are illuminated through self-assessments and definitions of the competencies of a trusted leader. One standout chapter introduces the enemies of trusted leadership, from the big daddy syndrome and the revenging angel to the rainmaker/jerk. Another section details how defining events such as downsizing can build or break trust. The book would have been strengthened by a clearer explanation of how trust inside the organization translates into gaining the confidence of outside clients and customers. Still, in this era of headline-grabbing corporate trust-breakers, Galford and Drapeau define what it means to be trustworthy. In their capable hands, trust stops being an intangible noun and becomes an active verb. -- Barbara Mackoff

My Personal Review:
Would you like to work with and for people you trust? Would you like to have their trust in return? What level of trust do you have now in your colleagues and leaders? How does that make you feel? How would you like to feel at work, instead? If you feel strongly about improving any of those dimensions of your work life, this is the best book I have seen on the subject for what leaders can do. Trust is actually a little simpler than this book makes it seem. Most of us trust those who look out for our interests as well as their own, care about us, explain why they are doing whatever they are doing, and listen to our concerns. That point gets a little lost in the underbrush of analyzing trust, and how it is built, lost and reacquired from various organizational perspectives. The book's strength comes in
three areas. First, there's self-assessment in the beginning that I found very revealing about how well trust is being generated at work now. Second, the authors tackle many painful, difficult situations at work and discuss how they can be addressed in more constructive, trust-building ways (such as layoffs, surviving mergers, sudden departures of key people, teams that are failing, and emotionally out-of-control colleagues and bosses). Third, there are an impressive number of case histories that most readers will recognize as being similar to something that has happened in their own work places (like cheating to get bonuses, egomaniacs running amok, insensitive comments in public, resentment after promotions), and excellent discussions of principled ways to handle them. The only way that this book could have been improved in what it addresses would have been by having quantitative expressions of how the participants in some of these situations reacted to what happened. Any leader will benefit by reading these lessons and becoming more sensitive to the implications of their words, actions and inaction. I also suggest that leaders review relevant sections in the book whenever they see a touchy situation building, as well as just after having made a hash of some organizational situation for ideas to help remedy their mistakes. If you are looking for how trust relates back out to nonorganizational stakeholders (such as customers, end users, suppliers, partners, lenders, stakeholders and the communities that the organization affects) those dimensions are mostly ignored except as isolated dimensions of some case histories (if the team is ineffective, the client usually notices and complains or gets a new supplier). After you finish reviewing all of the interesting ideas for doing better here, think about what you can do tomorrow morning to start building more trust by trusting others more. Donald Mitchell

Co-author of The 2,000 Percent Solution, The Irresistible Growth Enterprise and The Ultimate Competitive Advantage

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