

Trust Over Time

The first move, when your child has stopped letting you in.

If you are reading this late at night, wondering why your child seems to hate you, wondering what you did wrong, exhausted and ashamed and quietly certain you have tried everything, this is for you. I have been exactly where you are. This is the first thing I would want you to know.

You cannot force trust back. You cannot argue a child into feeling safe with you again, and it is not rebuilt in one big conversation. Trust comes back slowly, in tiny deposits, over time. And here is the part no one tells you: you go first.

FIVE THINGS THAT REBUILD IT

1. Go first.

You and your child are a closed system. Whatever you carry into the room, they learn from and hand back to you. Right now you have more capacity than they do, so you are the one who moves first. You do not wait for them to change. You change what you bring.

2. Small, and every day.

Forget the grand gesture. One tiny thing, every day, so small it feels like nothing. A day becomes a week, a week becomes a month. Trust is the quiet accumulation of small, consistent moments of feeling safe with you.

3. Compare only to yesterday.

Not to other families. Not to the child they used to be. The only question worth asking is this: were we a little safer with each other today than we were yesterday? That is the whole scoreboard. You can only compare yourself to you.

4. Make home the one safe place.

Your child may be fighting the world all day. If home becomes another place they have to defend themselves, there is nowhere left for them to land. You cannot control the world they walk into. You can decide that home is the soft place they come back to. I know how much this one matters, because I never wanted home to be the second hostile place.

5. Change yourself, not them.

This is the whole secret, and it is the hardest. You do not have to fix your child. You have to become the person who is safe to come back to, and let them copy that. I learned this by watching it happen in my own home: I did not change him, I explored what better looked like and became it, and he copied better. **The parent changing is the cause. The child changing is the proof.**

None of this is quick, and none of it is done through willpower or shame. It is done slowly, on purpose, with a great deal of self-compassion, for them and for you. We are not at the mercy of what we were handed. We change the story, because we love enough to be the change.

This is the first move. If it is landing, and you want to do the deeper work, that is exactly what I do. I would love to talk.

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