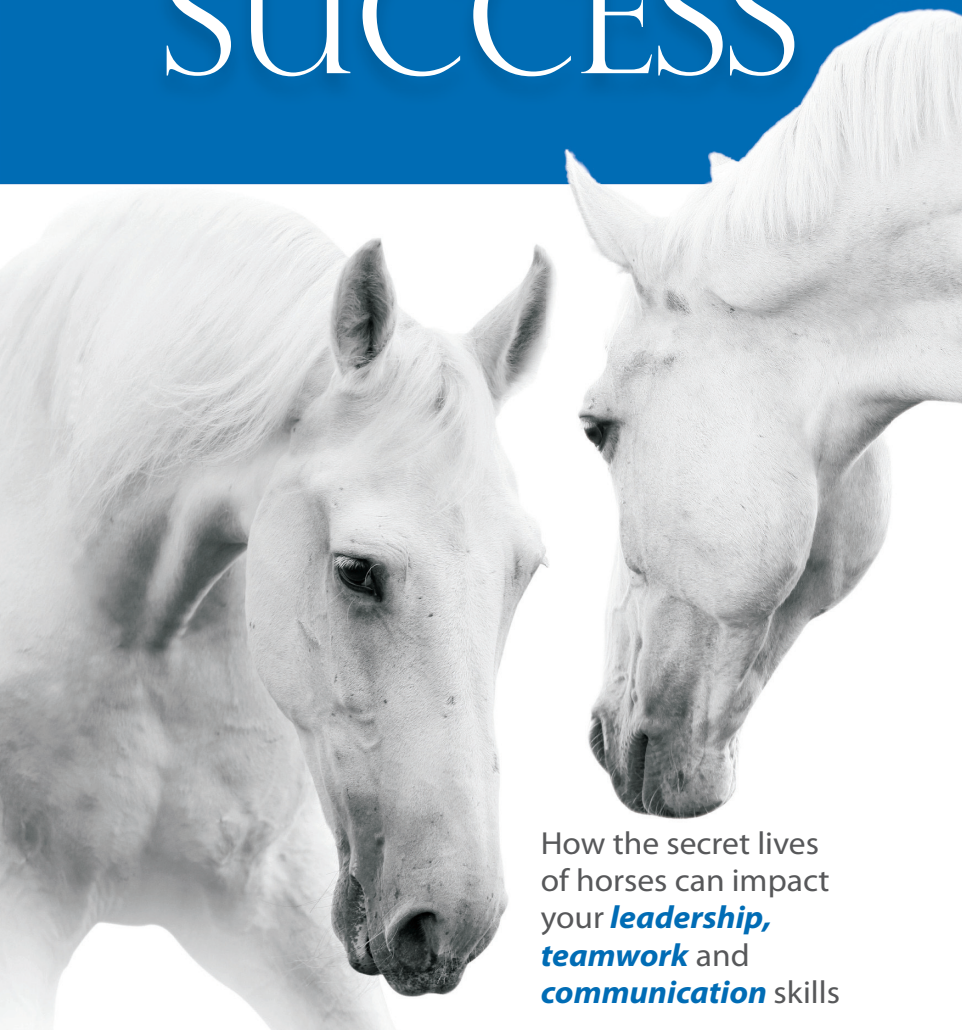


UNBRIDLED SUCCESS



How the secret lives
of horses can impact
your **leadership**,
teamwork and
communication skills

JULIA FELTON 

UNBRIDLED SUCCESS



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can impact your **leadership**,
teamwork and **communication** skills

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CHAPTER SIX

Trust The Process
and Your Intuition



*'Trust is the biggest business commodity
of the decade. Without trust relationships
and businesses falter.'*

Stephen R. Covey



Trust The Process and Your Intuition

‘Trust is the biggest business commodity of the decade. Without trust relationships and businesses falter.’

Stephen R. Covey

In today’s networked world, trust has become the new currency – the critical competency for individuals, teams, organisations and even countries. Trust impacts every situation – personal, business and even your relationship with a horse. Robert A. McDonald, Chairman, President and CEO, The Procter & Gamble Company, when referring to Stephen R. Covey’s book *Smart Trust*, states: “It is both a mindset and a toolbox for 21st-century leadership”. Therefore, trust clearly is an important commodity that cannot be overlooked in businesses and relationships today.

John C. Maxwell in *‘The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership’* defines that Law Six – The Law of Solid Ground – is based on the premise that Trust is the Foundation of Leadership. It is the glue that holds relationships and organisations together. Leaders cannot break trust with people and continue to influence them; it simply does

not happen. This is much the same with horses. Horses thrive on a trusting relationship with their handler/owner and once that trust is breached it takes a long time to repair, and in some instances is never repairable. A lack of trust is prevalent in business today as employees no longer trust employers to look after them. Long gone are the days when people had a job for life. Today organisations will quickly downsize when economic conditions get tough. There is no loyalty from employees to employers or vice versa. The recent financial crisis of 2008/9 has made more and more people distrustful of the banking institutions, as well as the government's ability to handle these situations. Witness too the growing mistrust between couples in relationships, resulting in some of the highest divorce rates in England and Wales that we have ever seen.

A great analogy to describe how trust is measured is to compare it to money. Each time you make a good leadership decision you build trust and so earn more money. Conversely, each time you make poor leadership decisions you pay out some of your money as trust is eroded. All leaders start with a certain amount of money in their pockets or piggy bank; how they act determines whether that pile of money grows or becomes depleted. If a leader keeps making bad decisions then eventually the pile of money disappears – they have run out of trust with those they influence and it doesn't matter whether the last blunder is big or small, it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back, so to speak, and the reason that mistrust develops in the organisation.

So how does a leader build trust in those that follow him, and also in himself, since good leadership involves leading from the inside out? The answer lies in consistently exemplifying:

- *Competence*
- *Connection*
- *Character*

Ralph Waldo Emerson states that “*Self trust is the first secret to success*,” because just as you can’t lead others until you can lead yourself, you can’t trust others until you can trust yourself. In his book *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen R. Covey describes the first wave of trust as self-trust. It is all about being credible and developing integrity, intent, capabilities and results that make you believable, both to yourself and others.

Building trust with yourself starts with the small things in life. Like making an appointment with your wife for dinner and then making sure that you follow through on it, despite an urgent commitment coming up at work. Being on time to meet friends and not finding excuses for cancelling just because you don’t feel up to it. Putting appointments in your diary and then making sure you keep them.

I know from my own experience how difficult it can be sometimes to keep those appointments with myself. It is so easy when the alarm goes off in the morning to find an excuse for not exercising today, or getting up and writing my book. Over these last few months it has taken me courage and determination to set aside time to write.

Sure, there is always something else pressing to do, but I know that every time I fail to keep these commitments to myself I notice my self-esteem and self-confidence slipping away. I fail to inspire others to believe in me and so trust in my abilities. The net result is that my business suffers. Though we all know it intuitively, research validates that a person's self-confidence affects their performance. This is why Jack Welch of GE always felt so strongly that "*Building self confidence in others is a huge part of leadership.*" Furthermore, a lack of self-trust also determines our ability to trust others. In the words of Cardinal de Retz, "*A man who doesn't trust himself can never really trust anyone else.*"

Just like the earlier analogy of trust being measured by money, it is the small things we do that ultimately impact how people trust us. We might not realise it, but telling a white lie here and failing to keep an appointment there, all impact the credibility we have. And if we are not credible then we are not trustworthy; people simply don't believe that we will follow through on our actions. We lack integrity. When working and being around horses it is essential that we show up as trustworthy because if we are not trustworthy we cannot lead and we know that horses are always looking for a leader.

Time and time again on my *Unbridled Success* retreats I come across people who simply lack credibility in the horse's eyes. One of the exercises that I get clients to do is to move a horse out of their personal space and it is amazing how many people can't do this. They make the request to the horse to move by waving their arms or swishing a light

reed (a long piece of willow) and then when the horse fails to move, they quit. They fail to follow through when their instructions are ignored. The result is that the next time the horse is asked to move he stands still or, even worse, backs into the person. The horse simply does not believe that the person really wants them to move – the person lacks credibility.

My recent personal experience with Bracken, a young horse in my herd, demonstrates perfectly the impact that failing to be consistent and credible in your actions can have. Bracken came to me having been found abandoned. She was weak and frail and quite afraid of humans. Over the following few months I cared for her and we developed a great bond and friendship. She trusted me implicitly to keep her safe as I never did anything to harm her. However, as happens in all great relationships, she gradually began to lose respect for me. Why was this? Well it crept up on me so slowly I barely noticed, but on reflection I started to make requests to her, like moving out of my space, and if she failed to move I gave her the benefit of the doubt. She was young and just starting her training. However, what was happening was that Bracken started to think that I was not credible. If I made a request and she did not oblige it wouldn't matter as I would just quit. Quickly, Bracken began to lose trust in my abilities and therefore my leadership as well. When I realised what I had done I was mortified, as I continually coach my clients in the importance of following through on their actions and being credible and yet, there I was ably demonstrating how to do exactly what I tell others not to do. It was an *Accelerated*

Horse Awareness™ (AHA) moment of huge proportions and a great lesson for me on how easy it is for us to quit before we get the outcome we desire.

I wonder how many leaders in business quit before they get the outcome they desire? The ramifications are huge as not only do you fail to complete the task you are undertaking, you lose credibility with your peers and ultimately, therefore, their trust and respect. And yet often, in my experience, leaders quit before they get the outcome they desire because they become influenced by others and lack trust in their own decisions.

Reflecting on my own career, I was guilty of this when I first became a leader. I'd ask people to undertake tasks and then because I lacked self-confidence in my abilities, I would allow myself to be persuaded that my decision was not a good one. I'd then back down, losing both trust and credibility with my team members. Conversely, when I was absolutely certain that I had made the right decision, even in the face of adversity, I was able to engage my team members and get the project completed super-fast. An example of this happened back in 1999 when we launched the first ever online internet-based benchmarking platform for the hospitality industry. At that time Andersen were pioneers in developing online communities for clients and had a platform called *KnowledgeSpace*. The company policy was that all online industry platforms should have the domain name **www.knowledgespace.com/industryname**. Well, I felt that this domain name conveyed no sense of community feel to our audience who

were all hotel professionals. So I flouted convention and named our online community **www.HotelBenchmark.com**. I must admit there were some agonising days once we had unveiled the site when we thought it might be closed down for not being company compliant, but in the end, good sense prevailed and HotelBenchmark remained the undisputed industry market leader for nearly a decade until it was sold in 2008.

I observe this pattern of inconsistent behaviour happening a lot between parents and their children. The child does something that the parent doesn't want, like taking some sweets out of the jar, and the parent tells the child "No." The child continues to unwrap the sweet and the parent continues to tell the child to put the sweet back. Then a relative/friend or another adult says, "It's OKAY, little Johnny can eat that." Immediately the parent has lost all credibility with the child and the child rapidly begins to learn that No does not really mean No. A better solution would have been to remove the sweet from the child and then move the child to an area away from the sweet. Initially, being this clear, assertive and credible in your communication takes time, effort, commitment and follow-through, but in the long term it pays dividends as you no longer have to repeat yourself and your child learns to trust that you mean what you say.

In *'The Speed of Trust'*, Stephen R. Covey identifies that there are Four Cores of Credibility which make you believable to both yourself and others. All are necessary for self-trust:

Core One: Integrity

- *Walking the talk and being congruent both inside and out*
- *Courage to act in accordance with your beliefs and values*
- *Most massive violations of trust are violations of integrity*

Core Two: Intent

- *Our motives, agendas and resulting behaviour*
- *Trust grows when we genuinely care for the people we interact with, lead or serve*

Core Three: Capabilities

- *Our talents, attitudes, skills, knowledge and style that inspire confidence – they are the means we use to produce results*
- *Our ability to establish, grow, extend and restore talent*

Core Four: Results

- *Track record, performance and ability to get the right things done*
- *Credibility increases when we accomplish what we say we will do and diminishes when we fail*

The first two deal with character and the second two with competence. If we visualise these four cores of credibility as a tree, then character forms the roots of the tree, because only once that is established, can trust and then leadership follow. Importantly, your character determines

your success at leadership and whether people will trust you. No one likes to spend time (i.e. follow) with people they don't trust, it simply does not make sense. Therefore a person's character communicates many things to other people:

Character Communicates Consistency

- *A leader needs to act consistently, day in day out, and can't decide just to quit because they are having a bad day*

Character Communicates Potential

- *When a leader's character is strong, people trust them and they trust in their ability to release their potential. This gives people hope for the future and boosts their personal self-esteem*

Character Communicates Respect

- *If you don't have character within, you cannot earn respect from others and respect is essential for lasting leadership*

How ironic it is that we spend millions of pounds annually developing competency skills in our team members when really our focus should be on developing character skills in the areas of integrity, authenticity and discipline. To develop integrity you need to become scrupulously honest, to tell the truth even when it hurts. To be authentic you need to be yourself with everyone and not play politics or pretend to be anything you are not. (Horses are master readers of authenticity as we saw in Chapter Three and can spot immediately if someone is not being authentic.)

Finally, to strengthen your discipline, you need to do the right thing regardless of how you feel. (Horses are masters at teaching discipline as, regardless of the weather, I have a commitment to go and check my horses twice a day and feed and water them – it is amazing how disciplined you can become when you know that someone or something is relying on you.)

Why we Follow Leaders...

Just like horses, people follow leaders whom they trust and feel connected to, people whose character is trustworthy. And how do they know if someone is trustworthy? Well, a large amount of this information comes from the person's body language and how they present. We have already discussed that 55% of communication is based on body language which both horses and humans can read with consummate ease.

I remember being at a Tony Robbins seminar when we were discussing body language and how it was the global currency of communication. There were over 7,000 people in the audience, all from different countries, backgrounds and walks of life and yet we could immediately connect with how each other was feeling by reading the other person's body language. For example, if someone was shy and timid their body posture would include bent-over shoulders, head down, eyesight averted, short slow steps, whereas someone who was happy and joyous would be standing tall, shoulders and head back, body open, invariably with a smile on their face. In the excellent book *The Definitive Book of Body Language – How to read*

others' thoughts by their gestures, Allan and Barbara Pease reveal the myriad of different body postures and how these can be interpreted. It is a great read for anyone involved in wanting to understand better the dichotomy between what people say and what they feel.

I'm sure you have all experienced the situation when you have walked into a room and you just know instinctively that something is wrong, even though everyone is professing that things are alright. There is just something about the way the people are acting – their body language and tone of voice lets us know all is not well. Often, even when we challenge people they continue to say that everything is fine when their body language is screaming something else at us. This is a classic case of the person's words not being aligned and congruent with what they are feeling in their body. Often this occurs when people feel under pressure. The gap between what people feel and what they say is huge and can be very costly to organisations. A national survey in the US suggested that 70% of employees were afraid to speak up at work, and in other cultures this might be even higher. Imagine what might happen if only companies would muster the courage to measure the lost productivity and stress generated through unexpressed fears and concerns. I expect the results would be shocking.

Max Landsberg suggests that we seek to try to build two types of trust when seeking to lead team members:

1. *Trust in Intentions*
2. *Trust in Abilities*

Like horses, team members want to know that our intentions are honest and being open is perhaps the most powerful way that a leader can create trust. When a leader opens up, people tend to be more open in return and a genuine interest and respect can develop. Conversely, if the leader is more like a 'closed book,' people find it difficult to connect with them because there is no commonality of purpose. This is the reason why open-plan offices have become more popular in recent years. The lack of closed doors makes managers and team leaders more accessible and so some of the physical barriers of communication are broken down.

Leaders are also more likely to instil trust in their team members if they demonstrate fairness, especially when making contentious decisions, and they can admit to their own Achilles' heel and seek to address this. Ultimately though, trust is developed through showing people that you are serving others (and/or a higher cause), as opposed to serving self. Building trust in your abilities is achieved through exuding appropriate optimism and confidence and ensuring that your accomplishments are recognised appropriately.

The Trust Mirror

Horses provide us with a perfect mirror of how trustworthy we are. When two horses meet for the first time, or indeed when a person meets a horse, the horse is asking three questions:

1. *Who are you?*
2. *What do you want?*
3. *How do you operate?*

Effectively the horse is seeking to assess how trustworthy you are in your intentions. Are you greeting the horse in order to make him do something for you or are your intentions simply that you want to say 'hello'? How the horse answers these questions will influence the response that you get. During that summer of 2004, when I couldn't catch my horse Toby, I suspect his answers to these questions would have been something like:

- *That is my miserable owner who only turns up at weekends.*
- *She wants to throw a saddle and bridle on me and expects me to take her for a ride.*
- *She is again being really self-serving. It is all about her, she cares nothing for my feelings or what I want from this relationship.*

Against that background it is hardly surprising that he opted to vote with his feet and not allow me to catch him. Reflecting on this situation made me think about similar questions we might unconsciously pose ourselves when we meet another person. Imagine you are going out to buy a new computer for your home. When you get to the computer store some of the questions that might run through your head as you meet the salesman for the first time are:

- *Do you care about me?*
- *Do you have the knowledge to help me?*
- *Can I trust you to make an unbiased recommendation that meets my needs and not your sales targets?*

The chances are that many of you have experienced a less than great buying experience if you could answer no to all three questions. Some of you may not have even been able to answer yes to one question. As a result, it is unlikely that you connected with, or indeed trusted the salesperson. Consequently you probably never bought the computer from that shop. I wonder what the long-term implications will be for that store where the salespeople don't care about their customers and the customers don't trust the salespeople? Maybe the answer lies in the fact that the internet is fast becoming a preferred shopping channel for many households. Rather than relying on trusting someone else, people prefer to undertake their own research and then purchase goods online. During Christmas 2011 it is estimated that some 25% of purchases were made online.

This is not to say that great salespeople don't exist; they do, and when you stumble across them they are like gold dust. My dad has an amazing relationship with Anthony, the salesman at his local Brayley Honda dealership. Anthony has been looking after my dad for some ten years now and without hesitation my dad trusts him with all the decisions he makes regarding new cars. No surprise then, that in the last decade my dad has bought five new cars there, and when unexpectedly I needed a new vehicle after mine was written off in an accident, my dad didn't hesitate in going to speak to Anthony to see how he could help. As usual he came up trumps, finding me a low-mileage second hand 4x4 that was perfect for my needs. So how did Anthony establish credibility and trust with my dad? Well,

my dad changes his car every three years so, as the three year anniversary of his existing car was fast approaching, he went out to a number of local car dealerships to see what was on offer. It was just before he went on holiday so he informed the salespeople he would not be making a purchase until he got home. I remember my dad telling me that a few days after he got home he received a telephone call from Anthony asking how his holiday was and if he could be of service. Anthony was the only salesman who followed through and took action. That simple act instilled confidence in my dad that Anthony genuinely cared for him and wanted to serve him; Anthony gained credibility in my dad's eyes and in doing so earned his trust. The rest is history.

Trust Your Instincts

At the beginning of this chapter we discussed that no one will trust you unless you trust yourself. Listening to that gut instinct deep inside your body is perhaps one of the greatest gifts that you can give yourself. It is there for your self-preservation but time and time again I find myself and my clients ignoring this inner voice, preferring to listen to the rational, intellectual left brain. Being around horses teaches you never to ignore your instincts but rather to rely on them as credible, unquestionable sources of information and communication. Put simply, if we don't listen to our instincts then we can get ourselves and our equine friends into danger. Once we begin to trust our instincts then a whole new world of opportunities and possibilities opens up for us as we tune into things that we never saw before.

As prey animals, horses have to listen to and trust their instincts in order to survive. This makes them great teachers and role models for us. By contrast, over the years humans have forgotten to listen to their natural instincts. In fact many of us carry on regardless, never listening to that inner voice, or if we hear it we ignore it and then we wonder why things turn out so badly. I recall when I was working in Corporateland that I invariably failed to listen to that inner voice. I made decisions that I regretted and kept taking on new projects even though I barely had time to complete the work I already had on my desk. Quite frankly, I didn't trust my gut instinct that was telling me to slow down and stop taking on more work. The net result was that I burned out and experienced fatigue. This was the ultimate way of my body telling me to stop. I couldn't help but hear the message loud and clear when I was drained of energy. But why was it that I never listened to what was going on and blindly carried on regardless? I guess it was because I never trusted myself, I never trusted myself to listen to that inner voice with all its wisdom. I never listened to my heart and gut and the funny thing is that despite this being our instinctive reaction (our survival mechanism), society has helped us numb this feeling and so discount it from the list of rational solutions that are available. And yet, listening to our instincts isn't a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength.

Another word for our natural instincts is our intuition. I remember a number of coaches suggesting in the past that I listen to my intuition but quite frankly I was never really sure what they meant. What was this illusive quality called

intuition and indeed what did it mean? I'm ever-indebted to Liz Mitten-Ryan of Equinistry who shared with me that intuition is made up of two words: inner and tuition – so to her intuition is about listening to our inner teachings, the things that we just know about the world, our gut feeling. There is nothing to learn, we just know when something is right or wrong. Listening to these ancient teachings that have been handed down from generation to generation can help us live a more fulfilling, authentic life. I know at times in the past that I have believed I don't have any intuition but then I remember that my intuition is always working; it is just that I'm not tuned to the right radio station to hear it. If I focus and make myself open to tune in and listen to my intuition then I can hear it loud and clear – just like the radio station playing in the background in my kitchen.



Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats

Connecting to success and becoming a leader of your own life is always a team sport and horses are masterful teachers in this journey. So start taking action and move your life forward with some of the amazing resources I have to offer.

Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats

The *Unbridled Success* Programmes and Retreats are for people just like you – people who are seeking to make a transformation in their lives and become more empowered through becoming better leaders. All the programmes and retreats form part of a safe, unique and truly memorable coaching experience. There is no riding as all the Horse Assisted Coaching sessions are carried out on the ground and it doesn't matter whether you have any horse experience or not. The opportunity for a breakthrough, whether in your business or personal life, is profound.

Whatever exercise you are engaging in with the horse, you are sure to get 100% unbiased instant feedback which is hard to ignore. The horses sense whether you are congruent and aligned in heart, body and spirit and so have an innate ability to see deep into your soul and challenge those beliefs and false self-images that our ego puts up to protect us.

Unbridled Success Programmes and Retreats focus on a number of key business and personal development areas including:

- *Leadership Begins with You*
- *Harnessing Authenticity*
- *Effective Communication*
- *Listening to Lead and Connecting to Success*
- *Developing Trust and Intuition*
- *Team Dynamics for Results*
- *Personal Influence and Power*
- *Maintaining Personal Boundaries*
- *Building Positive Relationships*

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About the Author

JULIA FELTON is passionate about helping people transform so that they can be empowered to lead the life they desire. By unleashing their own powerful potential, individuals and teams can get into flow so that they can make more money and experience success without the stress. Her innovative coaching and development programmes for individuals, teams and organisations are committed to creating positive transformation and getting outstanding results through creating greater trust and flow.

By connecting to and acknowledging their unique natural strengths individuals, teams and organisations are able to become more motivated, productivity increases and organisational results improve. Collaboration reigns and competition is banished as teams work together with a singular purpose.

Julia's extensive corporate experience includes building businesses and teams from the ground up. During her 12 year career at Andersen and Deloitte she was responsible for developing a business from an idea on a piece of paper to creating and the building a million pound business unit that became firmly established as the global market leader in its niche. Her unique ability to work at both a strategic and tactical level means that she is sought after as a high performance consultant, mentor and coach.

Julia holds a degree in Hospitality Management and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and a Fellow of the British Association of Hospitality Accountants. She is also a qualified NLP practitioner and coach. She is also a Talent Dynamics Performance Consultant.

Julia's passion is horses and as a natural horsemanship coach and a Licensed HorseDream Partner she often incorporates sessions working with the horses into her *Unbridled Success* leadership and team working programmes.

Julia is an accomplished speaker and the author of *Unbridled Success – How the Secret Lives of Horses can Impact your Leadership, Teamwork and Communication skills*.

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