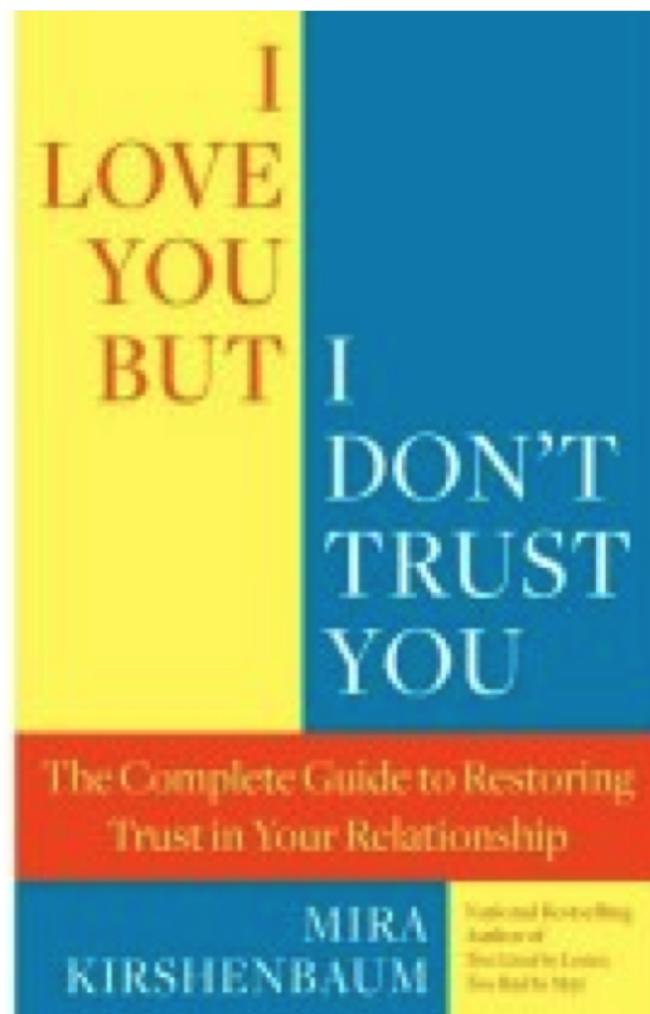


Mira Kirshenbaum Discusses Salvaging Your Relationship in “I Love You But I Don’t Trust You”



By Daniela Agurcia

It's no secret that trust is the adhesive that holds a healthy relationship together. To trust in a romantic partnership is to place confidence in your lover, and to assure that you can rely on his or her character to be there for you whenever you're in need. But trust, as essential as it is to a successful relationship, is fragile in nature. Once it's broken, it's difficult to piece back together, and often times if it is repaired, the cracks of betrayal still show, and the relationship trudges on, damaged at best.

Mira Kirshenbaum, relationship expert and author of eleven books, including her latest, *I Love You But I Don't Trust You*, offers some excellent advice on trusting your partner, and how to salvage the broken bond in a relationship after it has vanished.

We had the chance to interview Mrs. Kirshenbaum about her latest book, and she shed some light on how we are affected by this trust dynamic, and what we can do about it:

Some people have trust issues. Are there any early warning signs that issues may arise later in a relationship?

Here are the most important warning signs that trust issues may arise:

1. One partner lies more frequently.
2. One partner needs, or feels that they need, to control the other.
3. One partner is unreliable.
4. One partner has much more money or power than the other.
5. One partner has a history of having been hurt.

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What are some of the common mistakes that lead to mistrust in a relationship?

One very common and very destructive dynamic occurs when Person A tries to control Person B (whether for good or bad reasons). Person B resists control, usually by hiding what they do. Person A finds out some of what Person B has been doing, or just that Person B has been hiding, and attempts to gain even more control. Which leads Person B to hide all the more. In general, openness is best, even if what you are being open about is initially hard to hear.

What are some tips you have for saving a relationship that has been damaged by trust issues?

Of course, I outline a whole procedure for doing this in my new book, "I Love You but I Don't Trust You." But here are some tips that will be helpful: The sooner you both understand that you both played a role in getting where you are, the better. There are no purely innocent parties. If you go into couples therapy this will be driven home to you. So, you might as well embrace it now. If you are the one who broke trust, it's fine to be sorry, and you should certainly show how sorry you are, but the most important thing is showing that you really understand how hurtful your action was, and that you fully realize the damage you did. This means really listening to your partner, and showing you've heard, without excusing or explaining yourself. If you've been betrayed, there's a good chance you'll harbor that for quite a while. However, you need to realize that you're angry because you're scared. You don't want to be hurt again, and your anger—you hope—will seem very intimidating. Just realize that the longer your anger goes on, the more damage it will do to the relationship, because that anger will prevent the communicating the two of you will need to do to heal things.

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If a couple follows your protocol, how do they safeguard their relationship so that these issues don't arise again?

The trick is encouraging openness. We want our partners to tell us the truth, but we don't always like what we hear. This is where things get tricky. If we respond to things we don't want to hear in a way that discourages openness that will erode trust over time. The solution is to make it abundantly clear, powerfully clear, that while you may not have liked what you heard you are very grateful for your partner being open. Just ask yourself, "Am I making it as easy as possible for my partner to be open?" The wrong answer is, "Well, he should just be open."

If the relationship doesn't work out, what are some tips for getting back in the dating game, and learning to trust again?

You can't be in a relationship without a risk of being hurt, so don't worry about perfect safety. Just try to be as safe as you can one step at a time. It's important to encourage honesty and be honest yourself. If you see something that raises your suspicion, trust yourself by asking your partner why they did what they did. You need to ask what it meant to them, and what they thought about the impact it would have on you. Ask them how they expected you to respond.

Ask these questions calmly and patiently, making it as easy as possible for them to be open with you. This is just what a good detective would do; relax the other person, and you get the best information. Remember, knowledge is power. The more you know—by asking—the more you can figure out your next move. This is crucial when there are trust issues.

These are just some suggestions. The point is, learn everything you can about what they did and what it meant to them before you react. And then and only then will you be in a good position to respond.

What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone who wants to build back trust in their relationship?

They need to ask themselves, "What's the one thing I need most

from my partner to regain trust?" Ask for it clearly, and make sure you get it.

You can purchase Mira Kirshenbaum's book "I Love You But I Don't Trust You" on Amazon.