

Dolphins Swimming With Sharks:

A Look at Affect-Based Trust, Betrayal, and Reconciliation in an Organization

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Abstract

Researchers (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; McAllister, 1995; Morris & Moberg, 1994; Robinson, Dirks & Ozelik, 2004) have long recognized the importance of trust in the successful functioning of organizations. It is trust that enables a bond to develop between leaders and followers and creates the foundation necessary for high quality leader-follower relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). A trust-based relationship allows both the leader and the follower to have faith in the intentions and actions of each other, thus allowing the accomplishment of personal and organizational goals (Robinson, Dirks & Ozelik, 2004). But what happens to the leader-follower relationship when trust is betrayed? Increasingly betrayal and violation of trust is becoming commonplace within organizations (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Robinson, Dirks & Ozelik, 2004). What is the impact on leader-follower relationship when trust is betrayed? Will an attempt at reconciliation moderate the impact of trust betrayal on the relationship between the leader and the follower? This paper will examine the literature and propose a methodology of reconciliation to address the effects of betrayal on affect-based trust and the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship in an organizational setting.

Keywords: LMX, Leader-Member Exchange, trust, affect-based trust, betrayal, reconciliation, organization, leadership

Introduction

Trust plays a large role in many aspects of everyday life. From childhood, where trust would be illustrated by who we told our playground secrets to, to our days as an adult where trust would ultimately be symbolized by the phrase “I do.” However, trust spans beyond the basic form of friendship and love. Trust is also an integral part of the workplace because the lack of it damages organizations and relationships. When people do not trust each other they resort to self-protection and self-preservation (Boss, 1978), which destroy relationships causing misunderstanding and misrepresentation (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Researchers (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; McAllister, 1995; Morris & Moberg, 1994; Robinson, Dirks & Ozelik, 2004) have long recognized the importance of trust in the successful functioning of organizations. A trusting relationship within the organization can provide many benefits to both the leader and the follower. It is trust that enables a bond to develop between leaders and followers and creates the foundation necessary for high quality leader-follower relationships (Graen & UhlBein, 1995). A trust-based relationship allows both the leader and the follower to have faith in the intentions and actions of each other, thus allowing the accomplishment of personal and organizational goals (Robinson et al., 2004). Therefore, one of the primary tasks of leadership is to create an organizational climate in which dyadic relationships can grow in mutual trust, respect, and obligation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, just as our best friend would possibly betray our trust by telling our simple, youthful secrets to others, trust within an organization is also subject to acts of betrayal. What happens to the

leader-follower relationship when trust is betrayed? Increasingly, betrayal and violation of trust is becoming more common within organizations (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Robinson et al., 2004). What is the impact on leader-follower relationships when trust is betrayed? Will an attempt at reconciliation lessen the impact of trust betrayal on the relationship between the leader and the follower? While much research on trust in organizations has been completed (Chua, Ingram & Morris, 2008; Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki, McAllister & Bies 1998; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008), little has been conducted on the effects of trust in relation to breach of trust (Savolainen, Lopez-Fresno & Ikonen, 2014) or on attempts to reconcile trust breaches between leaders and followers. This paper will examine the literature on the LMX relationship, affect-based trust, betrayal, and reconciliation between the leader and follower. Additionally, we will propose a methodology to repair trust betrayal and give light for future research regarding the reconciliation process after an act of betrayal occurs, and its relation to affect-based-trust and the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship.

Trust

In 2002, Robert Hurley authored an article in the *Harvard Business Review* about trust in organizations. After surveying 450 executives he found that almost 70% of respondents acknowledged the statement, "I just don't know who to trust anymore" (p. 55). This outcome could be the result of previous experiences of trust violations or betrayal. Thus, it is important to understand the notion of trust, how to respond when trust is broken and the significance reconciliation could play in trust-based relationships. Mineo (2014) notes that trust is "the glue that binds the

leader to her/his followers” (p. 1). Additionally, it paves the way for organizational and leadership success as it enables greater commitment to organizational goals and limits intentions of departing from an individual’s position (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975). Accordingly, by reducing the intentions of an employee leaving the organization, the negative effects of voluntary turnover are also avoided.

Voluntary turnover is costly to an organization and negatively impacts employee morale and organizational culture (Lepak & Gowan, 2016).

Trust has been conceptualized in numerous ways. It has been considered a vague but beneficial process (Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975). In the world of business, psychology and research, trust has many different definitions, but it has the same goal of promoting healthy relationships between parties (Minion, 2012; Schneider, Konijn, Righetti & Rusbult, 2011). Trust revolves around expectations and one’s faith that the other party will fulfill that expectation as part of a psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Trust is often viewed as a reciprocal process between a leader and follower (Liangding, Jiwen, Chaoping, Rongjun & Yongxia, 2007). Trust lays the foundation for one to take risks, while it is expected that the other party will elect to abstain from taking advantage of the situation (Porter et al., 1975). Trust acts as a bridge between perceived risk and commitment to the organization (Lui & Wang, 2013).

Hosmer (1995) states, “trust is the reliance...on a voluntarily accepted duty on the part of another...to recognize and protect the rights and interests in a joint endeavor or exchange” (p.393). Within the diverse theoretical frameworks of trust, the belief that a person’s words accurately predict future actions forms a necessary

condition for the development of trust (Brower, Schoorman & Tan, 2000; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; McAllister, 1995; Mayer et al., 1995; Petrick & Quinn 2001; Parry & Proctor-Thomson 2002; Morrison 2001; Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000).

Establishing and maintaining trusting relationships between organizational leadership and their followers has the ability to provide numerous benefits including more fluid functioning, efficiency, and overall success of the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Shaw, 1997; Ugwu, Onyishi & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2014). For the leader, trust has been listed as a “way to influence” their subordinates (Savolainen et al., 2014, p. 247). Trust has even been described as the main component in building successful organizations (Shaw, 1997). Bennis and Nanus (1985) explain that trust is the essential component for an organization to function. Furthermore, the effectiveness of an organization can also depend upon trusting relationships (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Sousa-Lima, Michel & Caetano, 2013). Having a trusting relationship in the workplace can lead to greater productivity via cooperative behavior between employees (Jones & George, 1998). Establishing this trusting affiliation can also lead to a greater psychological well-being for those involved (Kelloway, Turner, Barling & Loughlin, 2012). Thus, for an organization and its employees to reach its fullest potential, a trusting bond connecting the leader and follower has to be established (Mineo, 2014). When unconditional trust develops between a leader and her/his follower the organization will see increased synergy, positive attitudes, tacit knowledge, and cooperation (Jones & George, 1998).

Mussig (2003) contends that the main characteristics that are preferred by followers in leadership are: honesty, forward thinking, inspiration, and competence. It is interesting to note the central element of these traits all involve trust. Cho and Poister (2014) noted that open, frequent, and clear communication is the leadership skill most associated with high levels of trust. Similarly, other researchers (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990) claim that valued leadership characteristics include: honesty, integrity, and truthfulness. Again, trust is the cornerstone of each of these concepts. Therefore, trust would be considered a significant factor that should be clearly understood, thoughtfully promoted, and effectively utilized.

Trust also plays a crucial role in turnover and satisfaction rates among organizational members. Zhu and Akhtar (2014) concluded that affect-based trust mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and follower's job satisfaction. Therefore, when levels of affect-based trust are high, job satisfaction levels among organizational members are also high. Knoll and Gill (2011) theorized that only when employees feel safe would they utilize the fullest potential that is within them, thus leading to higher levels of performance, and in turn increasing job satisfaction. However, to eventually feel safe with their leader, the follower had to first make themselves vulnerable. This vulnerability paves the way for a trusting, prosperous relationship, as well as potential acts of betrayal (Nienaber, Hofeditz & Romeike, 2015). In comparison to employees who have a sense of safety, those who do not feel this type of security often have higher levels of worry and lower job satisfaction (Balkan, Serin & Soran, 2014). Balkin et al. also claim that when trust is

present there are fewer employees who even have the “intent” of leaving their position.

While trust has many definitions, there are also several different types of trust (Bhattacharya, Devinney & Pillutla, 1998). McAllister (1995) identified two different types of trust. Cognition-based trust is grounded in the notion that another individual is seen as reliable and consistent (McAllister, 1995). Thus, cognition-based trust is rationale and logical (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). On the other hand, affect-based trust is centered on the emotional bonds and connectedness of the involved parties (McAllister, 1995). Affect-based trust typically has the traits of showing genuine care and concern for the other party (Pennings & Woiceshyn, 1987). Schaubroeck, Lam and Peng (2011) and Williams (2001) found this to be an extremely powerful form of trust. While we can rationalize a betrayal, the hurt caused by the betrayal creates emotional damage and degrades affect-based trust the most (Hansson, Jones & Fletcher, 1990). Thus, one would expect that when betrayal occurs affect-based trust would decrease.

Affect-based trust leads to the feeling of psychological safety for the parties involved (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). Building affect-based trust relationships allows newcomers to the organization to adjust more easily (Lapointe, Vandenberghe & Boudrias, 2014). In addition, strengthening affect-based trust can lead to more creativity in the organization by promoting an increased flow of ideas, with a greater amount of communication (Chua, Morris & Ingram, 2010). Yang and Mossholder (2010) found that affect-based trust was a predictor of in-role and extra role behaviors. Therefore, when affect-based trust increases, the overall

performance of the follower also increases. In turn, as increases in performance and trust are noted, greater organizational commitment can be observed (Zhu, Newman, Miao & Hooke, 2013). In addition, acts of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) also positively correlate with higher quality LMX relationships (Baker & Omilion-Hodges, 2013). Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence (2012) found that organizational citizenship behaviors are also increased when the leader and follower are in a trusting relationship. Therefore, if high quality, trust-based LMX relationships are connected with increased performance, then relationships damaged by acts of betrayal would most likely decrease affect-based trust, OCB and task completion. On a team level, complex knowledge sharing is also more fluid when affect-based trust is present (Chowdhury, 2005). Since knowledge is increased, the amount of organizational resources would also then increase. Furthermore, affect-based trust has been found to contribute to successful decision outcomes (Parayitam & Dooley, 2007).

Affect-based trust is a delicate concept where, within the environment of the organization, it is often challenged (Robinson et al., 2004). Reina and Reina (1999) noted "Trust means different things to different people. For some people, it means keeping agreements... For others, it means open communication between individuals. For still others, it means reliance on capabilities or competence" (p. 10). Violation of trust has been seen as a universal experience for everyone within an organization (Fuchs & Shohet, 2010). Violations of trust range from major infractions such as perceived unfairness (Brockner, Tyler & Cooper-Schneider, 1992) and broken contracts (Robinson, 1996) to minor infractions like failing to

return a phone call (Hogan & Hogan, 1994). Thus, it is possible for a leader to betray their follower's trust both unintentionally and purposefully, easily and deliberately. This underscores the importance of examining how betrayal affects the fragile relationship of trust between a leader and follower and the relationship between trust, betrayal, and organizational outcomes.

Although affect-based trust is difficult to establish and maintain, when it is achieved there are advantages for the leader, follower, and the organization as a whole. These advantages include many outcomes that affect the relationship between the leader and the follower. Newman, Kiazad, Miao and Cooper (2014) found that ethical leadership characteristics reflect positively upon cognitive trust. In turn, this leads to an emotional bond that facilitates a positive relationship between the leader and follower (Newman et al., 2014.). Therefore, when a positive relationship is established, affect based trust has the opportunity to begin to grow and flourish. Long-term organizational success, trust, and quality work relationships have been seen as intertwined (Sousa-Lima et al., 2013). Sousa-Lima et al. claim that as trust positively influences relationships, quality relationships also positively influences success. Therefore, it is important to nourish these leader-member relationships in order to maintain consistent, long-term success. To establish high levels of affect-based trust, leaders must model "good deeds" in a manner that treats people in the organization with trust and respect. No matter what leaders say about their trustworthiness they must show people that they care and respect their followers (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Congruence between word and deed is how individuals assess if a leader is trustworthy. A leader expresses

what he or she believes internally in word and deed (Rardin, 2001). In organizational life, “Constituents pay more attention to the values we actually use than to those we say we believe in” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 220).

Leader-Member Exchange

Understanding the link between affect-based trust and the leader-follower relationship is vital. This relationship between the leader and the follower has the power to influence follower attitudes, as well as their behaviors (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) has been considered a “relationship-based approach to leadership” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, P. 225). This form of leadership views the interactions between the leader and follower as a partnership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When the interactions between two parties within an organization are considered to be high-quality LMX relationships, it has been shown to be beneficial for the leader, follower, and organization (Dunegan, Uhl-Bien & Duchon, 2002). On the other hand, it is logical to assume that since high-quality LMX relationships produce benefits to the parties involved, when the relationship is damaged by trust violations via betrayal the benefits would decrease.

When high-quality relationships between the leader and follower exist, positive outcomes for the organization will occur (Walker & Walker, 2013). On an organizational level, productivity can be increased when superior LMX relationships exist. This can be seen in the study conducted by Newman, Schwarz, Cooper and Sendjaya (2015), where employees were more willing to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors when the leader was willing to invest in the relationship. The productivity of the follower has also been seen as a continuous cycle, when related

to LMX. As the quality of the relationship increases, one's job performance also rises. In turn, as job performance increases, there is also growth in the quality of the relationship (Park, Sturman, Vanderpool & Chan, 2015). Thus, as one of these increases, so does the other. Casimir, Ng, Wang and Ooi (2014) also illustrated that quality leader-member exchange relationships adds to a follower's level of organization commitment and increases in the follower's in-role performance.

LMX relationships that are seen as high quality provide for greater organizational commitment between the follower and the institution (Garg & Dhar, 2014). As commitment escalates there is also an uptick in the quality of service the organization produces (Garg & Dhar, 2014). Valued leader-member exchange relationships similarly provide benefits specifically for the follower such as increased satisfaction in the workplace (Bhatti, Islam, Mirza & Ali, 2015). Culbertson, Huffman and Alden-Anderson (2010) found that this type of relationship could lower hindrance-related stressors in the workplace such as a decrease in job related demands that hinder one's ability to reach their goal. Additionally, Culbertson et al. (2010) found that leaders have power that impacts the day-to-day lives of followers outside of the organization. The stressors that accompany work are not confined within the walls of the organization. The emotions surrounding office politics, family-work conflict, and job-related challenges can infiltrate life outside of work (Culbertson et al., 2010). Thus, a leader has the potential to reduce or increase these stressors based on the relationship they hold with each follower.

LMX relationships also play an important role in the aspect of trust. Quality LMX relationships are correlated with increased amounts of affect-based trust (Tu, Lu, Guo & Wang, 2014). When affect-based trust exists within a relationship, an emotional bond forms between the leader and follower and a sense of mutual obligation and reciprocal influence exists (Scandura & Lankau, 1996). Erkutlu and Chafra (2013) concluded that a quality relationship, alongside a trusting environment, would provide for a more “fruitful” organization (p. 828). Additionally, Erkutlu and Chafra found that when this type of relationship and environment is present, there is a lower chance for workplace deviances. Thus, this would decrease actions such as violations of trust and acts of betrayal.

Chen, Wang, Chang and Hu (2008) found there was a positive impact on trust development when high quality relationships were present. Chen et al. noted that when a leader has limited time and resources, they would select only certain individuals to foster a more trusting LMX relationship. Brower et al. (2000) confirmed this notion by observing quality relationships between the leader and follower are related to a superior level of trust and support. Followers who find themselves in a high trust, high LMX relationship, would receive favorable treatment such as rewards, more preferable assignments and tasks, and a greater amount of assistance from the leader (Murphy, Wayne, Liden & Erdogan, 2003). Thus, high quality LMX relationships provide incentives for followers to nurture and support the relationship between themselves and their leader. In turn, when a violation of trust or act of betrayal occurs, these rewards and incentives could serve as a motivational factor to reconcile the relationship that has been damaged.

LMX relationships have long been viewed as developing quickly and remaining constant over time (Bauer & Green, 1996; Dienesch & Liden, 1986). However, Kangas (2013) suggests that LMX relationships take time to develop, especially for new leaders. Thus, Kangas' findings should encourage leaders to continuously be involved in relationship development. It is important that leaders consistently make efforts to improve the levels of trust, especially affect-based trust given the outcomes associated with this form of trust, and the quality of their relationships with their subordinates. Robinson et al. (2004) found that these interactions and amount of trust between the leader and follower also plays a large role when an act of betrayal occurs. "It may mitigate the experience of betrayal by leading the trustor to create positive interpretations of evidence of a breach of trust, but it may also exacerbate the negative reaction when evidence is finally perceived as a betrayal" (Robinson et al.). Thus, the amount of trust a follower invests in their leader is influential on the follower's view when an act of betrayal is committed.

Scandura and Pellegrini (2008) suggest that even when high levels of trust are present in LMX relationships, trust still remains vulnerable. This vulnerability is often partnered with a sense of fear (Butt, 2004). Parties in a relationship within an organization construct psychological contracts between one another (Restubog, Bordia, Tang & Krebs, 2010). The origins of this fear may rest within the psychological contract and the individual. What happens if someone does not follow through with their promises or violates the trust that exists between two parties? When someone violates this trusting contract through inconsistencies in word and deed, an act of betrayal damaging the relationship between the leader and member

occurs. As previously noted, these inconsistencies and actions that take advantage of vulnerability have a lasting emotional impact (Hansson et al., 1990). Therefore, the effects of betrayal on LMX relationships and affect-based trust could lead to devastating outcomes for the individual and the organization.

Betrayal

As noted previously, trust and high-quality leader-member exchange relationships provide numerous benefits for the organization, leader, and subordinate. However, what happens when established trust is violated? Betrayal of trust has been defined by Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) as “a voluntary violation of mutually known pivotal expectations of the trustor by the trusted party (trustee), which has the potential to threaten the well-being of the trustor” (p. 549). Betrayal between the leader and follower has been considered one of the greatest threats to an organization (Hogan & Hogan, 1994). Reina and Reina (1999) compared acts of betrayal as having similar effects of a migraine headache. “[Betrayal] is energy-depleting and can shut down a whole system. If you have a migraine, you can’t work. If you feel betrayed, you may continue to show up at work, but you will not be very effective while brooding about your feelings.” (p. 6). Therefore, betrayal has the ability to affect an organization’s ability to achieve important goals.

Hogan and Hogan (1994) noted that this betrayal occurs because of “ambitious, selfish, deceitful people who care more for their own advancement than the mission of the organization” (p. 94). Thus, the caring for one’s own personal status and political advancement within the organization, instead of the physical, psychological and emotional welfare of others, creates a situation where a betrayal

of trust can occur. Betrayal can be seen in many forms, from small infractions to large violations (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). Jones and Burdette (1994) noted 25.4 percent of males and 9.4 percent of females identify that they have suffered an act of betrayal in the workplace. However, Jones & Burdette believe that betrayal can actually occur much more often, but the betrayal goes undetected. Moreover, these acts of betrayal seem to be burned into the minds of followers. 50 percent of incidents of betrayal reported by individuals have occurred over 20 years ago (Hansson et al., 1990). Additionally, 25 percent reported an incident that occurred more than 30 years ago (Hansson et al.). Thus, betrayal seems to occur on a frequent basis and has a lasting emotional effect. In turn, betrayal would also have a negative impact on the level of affect-based trust within the leader and follower.

Trust allows for risk taking behaviors where uncertainty is present (Mayer et al., 1995). One's willingness to allow for this uncertainty is the assumption that the leader will act within a certain set of principles and expectations (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). Thus, when one acts outside of or contrary to these principles, an act of betrayal can occur. Elangovan and Shapiro found that these acts of betrayal have five characteristics:

1. The act must be *voluntary*. If the act is unintentional or brought on through coercive action, an act of betrayal has not occurred. Additionally, Robinson and Bennett (1995) found deviant workplace behaviors, like acts of betrayal, must be willfully committed.
2. An act of betrayal has to violate "*pivotal expectations* of the trustor" (Elangovan & Shapiro, p. 501). These expectations must be personal,

emotion laden, and crucial to the survival of the relationship. These expectations can also be seen as areas of trust (Mayer et al., 1995).

3. The act of betrayal occurs only when “*mutually known expectations*” exists (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998, p. 500). This removes uncertainty as a contributing factor to betrayal.
4. The act must be a *violation of expectations*. This eliminates the possibility of “mere thoughts” being considered acts of betrayal (Elangovan & Shapiro, p. 501). Thus, an actual action has to occur.
5. An act of betrayal has to have the *potential to harm*. Thus, the emotional, psychological, or physical well-being of the trustor must be put in jeopardy (Elangovan & Shapiro).

In a study conducted by Murphy (1991), some view the phenomenon of trust violation as “Whoever betrays us is not with us” (p. A18). Thus, acts of betrayal can lead to long, deep, and lingering emotional hurt that could potentially negatively impact affect-based trust. This hurt can often reflect strong emotional reactions (Fuchs & Shohet, 2012). Fuchs and Shohet also found that these emotional responses might be from the act of betrayal itself, but also other components such as violation of trust.

Numerous types of behaviors or characteristics typically accompany an act of betrayal. Hogan and Hogan (1994) found that there were four characteristics of the ideal betrayer. First, a betrayer has a large amount of charisma. Someone who commits acts of betrayal is likeable, charming, and attractive (Hogan & Hogan). Therefore, this person makes it easy for others to grant them emotional trust, and in

turn expose their vulnerability. Accordingly, when the betrayer capitalizes upon this vulnerability, affect-based trust would be diminished. Secondly, a betrayer is typically self-absorbed (Hogan & Hogan, 1994). These individuals are egocentric and consumed with their goal of success. Therefore, leaders could utilize the vulnerability and trust that is placed within them in order to reach their objective. Next, Hogan and Hogan found that narcissists are natural betrayers. Finally, Hogan and Hogan identified individuals who are self-deceptive are more likely to commit an act of betrayal. Betrayers with this quality are willing to mislabel their actions in order to make themselves feel better, or deceive those around them. These characteristics provide leaders with the tools to betray. For example, those who are charming could experience an increase in trust from followers. In turn, the other three characteristics Hogan & Hogan noted give betrayers the opportunity to manipulate relationships, trust, and vulnerability.

Acts of betrayal are typically seen from the perspective of the betrayed. Acts of betrayal can be observed over a large range of issues (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Harris, 1994; Hogan & Hogan, 1994; Morris & Moberg, 1994; Reina & Reina, 1999). Bies and Tripp noted that an act of betrayal could be seen as broken promises, lies, or the stealing of ideas. Harris listed the withholding of support, sexual harassment, or favoritism as an act of betrayal. Other researchers (Hogan & Hogan) listed a range of acts of betrayal ranging from one not returning a phone call, to the deliberate sabotaging of someone's character or reputation. Reina & Reina noted that betrayal might include attacking another person's abilities, going behind another's back, or a lack of punctuality and timeliness. Morris & Moberg suggest that the root of all acts

of betrayal is centered on failing to meet someone's essential expectations in any relationship. Regardless of how the act of betrayal occurs, the action must be considered a violation of what one expects, anticipates, and trusts will happen. As stated previously, when these violations of trust occur, the damage from the betrayal can provide negative effects for the organization such as lower commitment and higher turnover (Shahnawaz & Goswami, 2011). These acts of trust violation and betrayal have been noted to occur frequently (Jones & Burdette, 1994) and have devastating emotional effects for all parties involved (Hansson et al., 1990). Given the positive outcomes of high quality, trust-based relationships and the negative outcomes associated with trust betrayal, is there a way to restore a relationship once a betrayal occurs? Can an attempt at reconciliation restore a damaged relationship?

Reconciliation

When an act of betrayal takes place, what happens next? Once damage to the relationship occurs, can that ever be mended? Furthermore, if the relationship can or cannot be mended, what does this mean for the organization? There are multiple ways for a follower to respond to betrayal ranging from avoidance (Bies & Tripp, 2005), to revenge (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001), to forgiveness (Tripp, Bies & Aquino, 2007). Reconciliation is also a possible response to an act of betrayal or injustice (Tripp et al.). Tripp et al. consider reconciliation to be "an effort by the victim to extend acts of goodwill towards the offender in the hope of restoring the relationship" (p. 22). Wilmot and Hocker (2011) defined reconciliation as the process of "reestablishing [the] relationship, renewing trust, and settling differences

so that cooperation and a sense of harmony [is] restored” (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011, p. 323). Therefore, if an injustice or act of betrayal occurs and attempts at reconciliation follow, then it is possible for the relationship and trust between the leader and follower to be repaired. When the trusting relationship between the leader and follower is mended, the organization will experience more fluid functioning (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) and increased effectiveness (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975).

Reconciliation has been thought of as having the “most direct effect on ongoing organizational relationships” (Aquino et al., 2001) as it is a possible outward expression of forgiveness. McCullough, Worthington and Rachal (1997) contend that forgiveness is a “set of motivational changes whereby one becomes decreasingly motivated to retaliate against an offending relationship partner, decreasingly motivated to maintain estrangement from the offender, and increasingly motivated by conciliation and goodwill for the offender, despite the offender’s hurtful actions” (p. 321-322). It has been noted that the similarities between forgiveness and reconciliation make them appear to be synonymous (Watt, 2014). However, Tripp et al. (2007) claim that it is possible to reconcile but not forgive, and vice versa.

Once a betrayal of trust occurs, undergoing the process of reconciliation and moving forward can provide benefits to the victim, betrayer, and organization (Daicoff, 2013; Reina & Reina, 1999). Once reconciliation occurs, an angry and hostile environment can be reduced or eliminated (Daicoff, 2013). Thus, when this type of emotion can be decreased, the climate of the organization is improved and

the possibility of restoring the affect-based trust within the relationship can occur. Additionally, following reconciliation where organizational hostility decreases, and team-oriented behaviors increase, employees are more motivated to seek high quality LMX relationships (Erdogan, Liden & Kraimer, 2006). Daicoff (2013) also found that reconciliation increases the opportunity for individual reform. Accordingly, the effects of the reconciliation process can lead to greater organizational commitment that may have been lost as a result of a betrayal (Garg & Dhar, 2014).

Since reconciliation can be “very beneficial” (Hassan, n.d., p. 2) once an act of betrayal has occurred, it is important to understand the process in which reconciliation can be achieved. Aquino, Tripp and Bies (2006) noted that reconciliation is more likely to occur when an organization has a just climate. Fein, Tziner, Lusky and Palachy (2013) explained that when an organization has a just climate, higher-quality LMX relationships are present. On the contrary, when an individual does not think the organization will provide justice to the offender, the victim will “take the law into their own hands” (Aquino et al., 2006, p. 666). Denise Rousseau (1995) suggested organizational employees could respond to acts of injustice or betrayal in one of five ways: voice, silence, exit, neglect and destruction. “Voice” is seen as the only healthy way for an employee to respond, by taking actions in order correct the injustice. “Silence” is a form of nonresponse from the betrayed, while “exit” is their departure from the organization. Having more harmful impacts, “neglect” is when the individual betrayed does not perform their organizational responsibilities, negatively influencing productivity and

effectiveness. Furthermore, one can act in “destruction.” When this occurs the individual being betrayed takes counterproductive actions that can harm or devastate the organization (Rousseau, 1995).

When individuals are exposed to situations or examples where organizational justice is present (rewarding ethical behavior/punishing unethical behavior), an increase in future ethical decision making behavior occurs (Ashkanasy, Windsor & Treviño, 2006). Cassar and Buttigieg (2015) defined interactional justice as “the degree of fairness associated with the interpersonal treatment experienced in the process of distributing resources and rewards” (p. 220). Interactional justice has been considered a good predictor of trust within the organization, specifically affect-based trust (Beugre, 1997). Additionally, Bies (1987) noted that this type of justice offers penance or suffering as a means of restoring equity to the relationship. Thus, when an act of betrayal occurs, interactional justice would offer something from the offender to the victim in hopes of achieving reconciliation. However, the ways this can occur varies greatly.

Apologies are often considered the first thing someone can give to another when an act of injustice occurs. Tomlinson, Dineen and Lewicki (2004) claim that when an apology is sincere, reconciliation can occur. How the betrayed views the sincerity of the apology is trust based (Hornsey & Wohl, 2013). Hence, the previously established trust (or lack thereof) between the leader and follower influences the likelihood of whether the victim will view the apology as genuine. Hornsey and Wohl also argue that the victim’s trust in the genuineness of emotion expressed during the apology, motives for the apology, and trust in the belief the

behavior will change in the future influences the ability for an apology to reconcile the relationship. Witvliet, Worthington, Wade and Berry (2002) also concur that an apology can aid in bridging the injustice gap if it is seen as heartfelt. Thus, as the injustice gap decreases and trusting relationships are mended, increases in organizational effectiveness will occur (Sousa-Lima et al., 2013). Additionally, given the injustice gap shrinks while the relationship mends, affect-based trust will also begin recovering.

The suffering of a punishment can also be seen as something that can be used to mend the relationship between the leader and the follower. Adams' (1965) model of inequity was centered on imbalance. The model would suggest that the betrayed would seek to eliminate the imbalance between the two parties (Adams). However, as Hogan and Emler (1981) noted, when a punishment is issued, the individual betrayed sees this as a method of penance for the act of injustice. This is similar to the findings of Exline, Worthington, Hill and McCullough (2003), who noted that it was easier to attempt forgiveness and reconciliation when individuals have already been punished. When these attempts are made, and trusting affiliations are reestablished, a greater psychological well-being for the individuals involved can be expected (Kelloway et al., 2012).

Revenge can also be seen as a method to achieve justice. Tripp et al. (2007) noted, "Although it may sound oxymoronic, we argue that revenge can promote forgiveness" (p. 27). When management does not act, individuals are motivated to settle the score, which can lead to revenge-seeking behaviors (Bies, 1987). Tripp, Bies and Aquino (2002) found that when one seeks revenge in a proportionate

manner, the offender is more likely to agree that the imbalance has been evened, and is more willing to forgive, reconcile, and move on. Thus, granting the opportunity to reestablish affect-based trust and mend the quality of the LMX relationship. However, it is important to note the complexity of revenge-seeking behaviors. Bies, Tripp and Kramer (1997) noted that one often has an ego-defensive cognitive bias. For example, the one seeking revenge will often view the offense as much harsher than the offender would. If the individual seeking revenge cannot act in a proportionate manner, it is likely that both parties will enter a cycle of vengeful behaviors. The continuous cycle of revenge-seeking behaviors can be classified as “counterproductive work behavior” (Raver, 2013, p. 152). Raver noted that this could either be directed upon the other individual, the organization, or both. “Examples of organizationally-directed [counterproductive work behaviors] include stealing from the company, withholding effort (shirking), lying about hours or work activities, sabotaging equipment, having excessive absenteeism, and bad-mouthing the company. Examples of interpersonally-directed [counterproductive work behaviors] include making threats, using aggressive gestures, spreading rumors, ostracizing peers, making sexually or ethnically inappropriate comments, and engaging in deception to harm someone’s career” (Raver, p. 152-153). These behaviors could further break down affect-based trust and negatively impact the overall success of the organization (Shaw, 1997). Thus, it is important for organizational leaders to be vigilant in monitoring the reconciliation process amongst followers and lower-level management.

Proposed Relationships

The importance and benefits of trust in organizations has long been studied (Bachmann, Gillespie & Priem, 2015; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Kramer & Cook, 2004; Sætren & Laumann, 2014). Trustworthiness within an organization has been shown to increase individual task performance and organizational competitiveness (Li, Yan & Jin, 2007). Sousa-Lima et al. (2013) noted that organizational successes could be attributed to trust and quality work relationships. Thus, it is essential to nourish the leader-follower relationship. When a Leader-Member Exchange approach is instituted in an organization, the interactions between the leader and follower are considered partnerships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Low-quality LMX relationships have been associated with higher levels of role conflict, stress, turnover, and discrimination, in addition to lower levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and skills utilization (Furunes, Mykletun, Einarsen & Glasø, 2015). On the contrary, high-quality LMX relationships built on affect-based trust have been seen as beneficial for the leader, follower, and organization (Dunegan et al., 2002).

As previously noted, betrayal and trust violation between a leader and follower has been considered one of the greatest threats to an organization (Hogan & Hogan, 1994). This threat to an organization happens on a frequent basis, and can have devastating and lasting affects (Hansson et al., 1990; Jones & Burdette, 1994). Morris and Moberg (1994) explained that the root of betrayal is the failing to meet someone's essential expectations. Acts of betrayal can range from broken promises, sexual harassment, and the stealing of ideas to not returning a phone call and

lacking punctuality and timeliness (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Harris, 1994; Hogan & Hogan, 1994; Reina & Reina, 1999). Betrayal has a negative emotional impact upon the individual (Fuchs & Shohet, 2012), and a negative impact on the organization as well (Shahnawaz & Goswami, 2011). Thus, it is important to pursue the process of reconciliation when acts of betrayal transpire.

Reconciliation has been defined as “an effort by the victim to extend acts of goodwill towards the offender in the hope of restoring the relationship” (Tripp et al., 2007). When violations of trust or acts of betrayal occur, reconciliation can be “very beneficial” (Hassan, n.d., p.2) to the victim, betrayer, and organization (Daicoff, 2013; Reina & Reina, 1999). Forgiveness and reconciliation can be achieved through interactional justice, where the offender would offer something to the victim (Bies, 1987). Apologies, punishments, and revenge are often seen as the beginning steps in the road to reconciliation (Hogan & Emler, 1981; Tomlinson et al., 2004; Tripp et al., 2007). However, if revenge is not conducted in a proportionate manner, a cycle of vengeful behavior could occur that would result in harm to the organization via counterproductive work behavior (Raver, 2013).

Our analysis points to the centrality of reconciliation when acts of betrayal occur, in order to mend relationships between the leader and follower. The benefits of a high-trust, high-quality LMX relationship are numerous (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Porter et al., 1975, Ugwu et al., 2014; Walker & Walker, 2013). Additionally, betrayal of the relationship and violation of trust has been considered an “inevitable” part of leadership (Fuchs & Shohet, 2012, p. 233). Once the betrayal occurs, the benefits previously noted are diminished and adverse effects often ensue

(Shahnawaz & Goswami, 2011). Therefore, we propose a methodology of reconciliation in hopes of restoring the broken trust and relationship. We advocate that when genuine reconciliation attempts are made, the other party will be more willing to set aside differences and move past the act of betrayal. We suggest that this restoration of affect-based trust and the relationship will reduce the adverse effects of the betrayal, and begin the reinstatement of benefits that accompany a high-trust, high-quality LMX relationship.

Future Research

Despite the importance of reconciliation in organizations after an act of betrayal occurs, a relatively small amount of research has been conducted on the topic. While a plethora of research revolves around reconciliation from the perspective of veterans (Smoker, 2014), genocide (Mukashema & Mullet, 2012), and other traumas (Worthington & Aten, 2010), research concerning reconciliation on a less traumatic scale and in an organizational setting is lacking. Thus, the author encourages researchers to take a new direction in their experimentation. The devastation impact on affect-based trust following betrayal and the benefits accompanying a reconciled high-quality LMX relationship are significant and should thus be investigated. An instrument to measure the effects of reconciliation on affect-based trust should be developed. However, there are challenges associated with testing the impact of reconciliation on affect-based trust. Trust is based on one's perception and can be tested (Porter et al., 1975). However, it is less clear how to measure reconciliation. The parties involved in the reconciliation process often view the attempts to mend the relationship differently (Bies et al., 1997).

Therefore, research should be conducted on a process of reducing the ego-defensive bias. Additionally, since reconciliation and forgiveness have been seen as synonymous topics, future researchers may want to explore a forgiveness aspect in an effort to mend the relationship following an act of betrayal. There is also an ethical challenge to betrayal research. How one subjects an individual to the emotional impacts of betrayal should be carefully considered. Nevertheless, future research in the area of affect-based trust, LMX relationships, betrayal, and reconciliation would provide beneficial knowledge to the leader, follower, and organization.

Conclusion

Our research lends light on the need for future research in the area of reconciliation after trust has been betrayed in the workplace. Violations of trust, especially affect-based trust, occur on a frequent basis, and can have devastating impacts upon an organization and its leader-follower relationships. In a time where scandal and betrayal plague organizations, it is important to remember the fragility of trust, and the process of mending it once broken. Whether you are a dolphin or shark, when there's blood in the water, it is important to heal the wound instead of capitalizing on the wounded.

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