

Trust From Zero™

Module 2: The First Word Kept

A PRACTICAL GUIDEBOOK

Make a clear commitment that fits your actual capacity.

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Discovery by DeVol

YOUR PRACTICE

One specific agreement, confirmed with the people it affects.

Put the lesson to work

Make a clear commitment that fits your actual capacity.

THE FOUNDATION

Begin with The Zero Point: examine one situation through mental, structural, physical, and emotional lenses. Bring one manageable situation into this module.

THE PRACTICE

One specific agreement, confirmed with the people it affects. Use a situation that is safe and appropriate for you to influence.

PRIVATE PARTICIPATION

This PDF has no form fields. Think through the prompts or write in your own notebook or notes app. No response needs to be submitted.

THE LIMIT

These are educational activities, not a clinical assessment, trust score, or substitute for qualified advice. Follow relevant duties, policies, and professional guidance where needed.

Choose a page

You can try one practice or work through the module at your own pace.

PRACTICE 1

Before saying yes - [page 4](#).

PRACTICE 2

Check your capacity - [page 5](#).

PRACTICE 3

Make the promise specific - [page 6](#).

PRACTICE 4

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PRACTICE 5

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PRACTICE 8

A promise to yourself - [page 11](#).

USE IT IN LIFE

Try the experiment on [page 13](#). Record what happens on [page 14](#). Plan a useful next occasion on [page 15](#).

Before saying yes

A commitment needs a shape before it can be kept.

DO

Choose one everyday request. State what is being asked, who needs it, and when it is needed. Ask what a useful result would look like.

CHECK

What is still unclear? Write one question before making the promise.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

“What do you need me to send, and when will you use it?”

Check your capacity

A willing answer and a workable answer can be different.

DO

Check the time, resources, access, and other commitments the task requires. Include work already on your calendar.

CHECK

If you cannot reasonably do it, offer a smaller task or decline. Another person can decide whether the alternative meets their need.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

“I can review two pages Thursday. I cannot review the full report by then.”

Make the promise specific

A listener should not have to guess what your yes means.

DO

Complete this sentence: I will [action] by [time], using [agreed method]. Confirm what is included and what is outside the agreement.

CHECK

Can both people describe the same result? A private intention is not yet a shared agreement.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

“I will send the corrected schedule by 3 p.m. Wednesday. This covers next week only.”

Name a dependency

Some tasks require another person's input or permission.

DO

Identify what you need before you can finish. Ask for that input and explain how its timing affects your estimate.

CHECK

Do not present an uncertain dependency as a guaranteed result. Set a time for your own update.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

"I need the final list to estimate the work. I will update you tomorrow even if it has not arrived."

Give the agreement a home

Memory alone may leave people with different versions of a promise.

DO

With the relevant person's agreement, record the task, owner, result, and timing in an appropriate shared place.

CHECK

Ask whether your summary matches their understanding. Keep sensitive details out of an unsuitable shared tool.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

"My understanding is that I will send the draft Friday. Please tell me if I have missed something."

A respectful no

A promise you cannot keep does not become helpful because it sounds generous.

DO

Practice declining one hypothetical request. Be direct and provide only the explanation you want or need to give.

CHECK

An alternative is optional. Offer it only if you can fulfill it. A clear no leaves the other person able to plan.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

"I cannot take that on this week."

Change the agreement openly

Circumstances can change after a reasonable commitment.

DO

If you foresee a delay, give an update as soon as practical. Explain the impact and propose a realistic next step.

CHECK

A proposed change needs discussion when others depend on the task. Do not assume silence means acceptance.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

“I will miss the time we agreed. I can deliver the first section today; can we discuss the rest?”

A promise to yourself

Choose something useful without turning it into a test of worth.

DO

Make one private commitment with a clear action and a realistic opportunity to do it. Record the materials or support it requires.

CHECK

If you miss it, check the conditions and revise. Avoid adding penalties or making a larger promise to compensate.

EXAMPLE OR WORDS TO TRY

“After lunch, I will spend ten minutes sorting the documents I need.”

A worked example

An illustrative situation, not a correct answer to your own experience.

THE SITUATION

A colleague asks for a complete presentation tomorrow. You have two hours available and do not have the approved data.

THE ACTION

You ask which part is needed for tomorrow's decision. You agree to provide a two-page outline, with data gaps marked, by noon.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

The colleague confirms that this is useful. The larger presentation remains unpromised until the necessary inputs and time are agreed.

One experiment

One specific agreement, confirmed with the people it affects.

MY STARTING POINT

Choose one situation. What is happening, and whose agreement or support matters?

MY ACTION

Make a clear commitment that fits your actual capacity. Name exactly what you will do and a realistic occasion for it.

MY CONDITIONS

What information, access, materials, or consent is needed? What must be clarified before you act?

MY OBSERVATION

What will you look for afterward? Describe something you could see or verify, rather than a conclusion about someone's character.

MY LIMIT

What will you do if the action is unsuitable, cannot be completed, or no longer serves the need?

My practice record

Use your own paper or notes app. A few words are enough.

DATE AND CONTEXT

When did you try the practice? What situation did you choose?

RECORD 1

The request and the person affected

RECORD 2

What I can realistically agree to

RECORD 3

The specific result and timing

RECORD 4

Dependencies or limits

RECORD 5

How I confirmed the agreement

Carry it into another day

A completed worksheet is a starting point for doing.

CHOOSE THE NEXT OCCASION

Where could you use this practice again? Choose a naturally occurring situation rather than adding work just to complete the book.

KEEP ONE USEFUL ADJUSTMENT

Name one action, question, or boundary that helped. Decide where a reminder would be useful.

CHECK ITS EFFECT

Afterward, ask what changed and what remains uncertain. Repeating an action is useful only while it serves the actual need.

IF SOMEONE ELSE IS INVOLVED

Confirm expectations with them. Do not assume the exercise gives you permission to assign tasks, monitor them, or change their access.

A place to finish

Take stock of what you did, not only what you thought about.

NOTICE

What did you learn from the action? What would you keep or change?

WORDS TO KEEP

I can make an honest agreement without promising everything.

CONTINUE

The next module is Module 3: The First Action. Bring the questions your practice raised.

ONE OBSERVATION AT A TIME

A successful action does not prove that a person or system is trustworthy in every situation. Keep your judgment proportionate to what you have observed.

The seven-module series

Trust From Zero™ by Toni Shereé DeVol.

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The Zero Point

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The First Word Kept

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The First Action

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The Small Things

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Alignment

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The Break

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The Rebuild

THIS EDITION

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