

ON THE MOVE

WHOM DO YOU TRUST

Lisa Dundas views herself as a trusting person — but experience has taught her to place limits on whom she trusts, and to what degree.

"I always feel I want to trust people right away, but I know I can't. I found that out the hard way," said Lisa, 16, a parishioner at St. Michael's Church in Newark.

More than once, she said, she has divulged confidential in-

formation to friends — only to find out later they've spread those secrets to other people. She said that she's trying to give those friends a second chance, even though she's wary of how much trust she can put in them anymore.

"If they didn't say anything again, the friendship would last. But if they did, it would kind of disintegrate," Lisa said.

Kristina Lyons went through a similar problem with a person "who I thought was a good friend." After Kristina found out her trust in that person had been violated, the process of restoring that friendship has been difficult.

"It's building back up slowly," said Kristina, 16, from St. John the Evangelist Church in Newark Valley.

Such experiences help to support Karen Schranz's view that close relationships are difficult to form when trust is absent.

"If you don't have trust, it would be hard to talk to anybody," said Karen, 14, from St. Theodore's Church in Gates.

On the positive side, Jennie Santo said she has formed deep bonds with several people by being trustworthy.

"A lot of my friends come to me and tell me things that are very secretive. It makes me feel real happy that they tell me things they wouldn't let out to anybody else," said Jennie, 13, from St. Leo's Church in Hilton.

The only time Jennie would consider repeating such information, she said, would be if her friends were in danger of hurting themselves.

"If it really came to the point where I couldn't do anything about it, I would go to a guidance counselor," she said.

Kristina observed that people can be considered trustworthy "if you can tell them close, personal secrets and you know they're not going to spread it around. You can tell them anything, and they're not going to judge you."

Mark Bellavia said he has always put his parish priests in this category.

"I've told things to priests that I've never told anyone else, and it doesn't affect my relationship with them. It never has," said Mark, 15, from St. Lawrence Church in Greece. "You should be able to go to them with anything. They're like a holy person — they're connected with God in a way we aren't. So you should trust them."

Eric Phillips added that he places a similar level of confidence in his teachers.

"We have to trust our teachers to give us the knowledge we need to grow up," said Eric, 16, from St. Theodore's.

Teens interviewed for this story said they often place their deepest trust in people they've known the longest, such as family members and best friends. For instance, Eric said he "shares everything" with a pair of friends he has known for about two years.

Karen said she has known her best friend for 10 years.

"If there was no trust there, we could not be friends," she remarked. Meanwhile, Lisa said she can share "re-

ally, really personal" information with her parents and her best friend.

"I know they're not going to tell people what I told them," she said.

Other long-term relationships, such as marriage, require similar degrees of trust, Karen added.

"If you love that person, you think you can tell that person anything," she said.

At the same time, Lisa noted that it doesn't necessarily take years to develop trust with someone.

"It's a lot of talking and getting to know each other. I don't think it really has to do with time," she said.

"Sometimes you just hit it off," said Jeremy Bedford, 15, from St. Ann's Church in Hornell.

For the most part, though, Jeremy said he observes caution with people he has just met.

"I'd give them a normal level of trust, but not an extraordinary level," Jeremy said.

"You have to know a little about them," added Tina Gammariello, 15, from St. Jude's Church in Gates.

Kristina observed that trust is difficult, if not impossible, for many to come by.

"I know some people who can't trust anybody. They kind of shut everybody off," Kristina said.

Lisa said that such individuals may, at one time, have gotten their trust violated so badly that "they couldn't bear to trust anybody ever again."

Karen added that some teens may acquire mistrustful attitudes from their parents.

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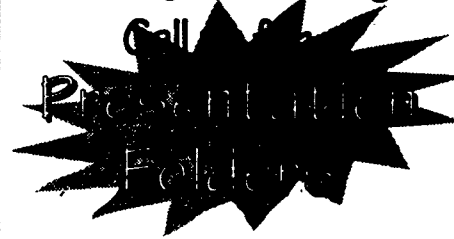
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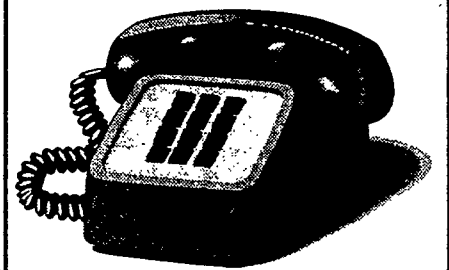
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