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As election season nears, candidates declare their intentions and supporters build campaign teams, each working to present platforms that persuade voters their candidate will outperform the rest. Therein lies the problem as trust is not present. Untrustworthy people have violated whatever trust once placed in others to such an extent, it is exceedingly difficult to trust others.

In a world shaped by relationships and interdependence, trust serves as the foundation for human interaction. Trust is an unquantifiable bond that fosters intimacy, cooperation, and a sense of community. However, individuals who are inherently untrustworthy find it difficult to trust others, leading to myriad social and emotional complications.

People who are credible, dependable, relatable, and self-aware tend to be trustworthy. Trustworthy people are also able to trust. Credibility means competent, ableness or the ability to deliver. In the political example, does the candidate possess the knowledge and skills required for the position?

Dependable is the one attribute that takes a bit more study to ensure authenticity. The phrase "demonstrate actions consistent with stated intentions" is particularly relevant in this context. In my decades of study on this attribute, I include two other components namely emotional composure and rational thought. Back to our political candidates can we count on them to be emotionally dependable or are they apt to become extremely angry resulting in emotional chaos? And do they exhibit consistent rational thoughts or do their positions fluctuate as fast as the wind in Colorado?

Developing relational attributes can be tough. People seek assurance that others are trustworthy. When asked about the top quality they value in a close friend, they quickly say, "They support me and wouldn't do or say anything to hurt me."

Self-awareness impacts the first three attributes. Narcissistic traits are common, and some individuals may have narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). Duke Health uses "SPECIAL ME" to summarize NPD's nine signs. **S**ense of self-importance, **P**reoccupation with power, beauty, or success, **E**ntitled, **C**an only be around people who are important or special, **I**nterpersonally exploitative for their own gain, **A**rrogant, **L**ack empathy, **M**ust be admired and **E**nvious of others or believe that others are envious of them make up the nine signs. I suspect each of us knows a bit about these tendencies, but hopefully not the extreme condition.

Let us look at self-awareness as a continuum with narcissists and other-centered as the far right and far left as reference points. Other-centered refers to a perspective or way of thinking that prioritizes the needs and well-being of others over one's own. It involves empathy, kindness, and real concern for others' well-being. Being other centered involves actively considering how one's actions affect those around them and making choices that benefit others, even at a

potential personal cost. When speaking to groups I can predict based on the groups demographics the politicians identified as exhibiting strong narcissistic tendencies. I then ask the group to take a second and identify one or two individuals from the past 50 years who appear to be very other-centered. I narrow this down a bit and advise them that they cannot say their mother or Jesus. Mother Theresa and Ghandhi are the two most frequent choices for other-centered.

To increase trustworthiness, mankind must first define it. Then with self-evaluation and reflection we can then progress. By contrast, God's very unchanging nature epitomizes trustworthiness. Consider promise fulfillment, historical evidence, moral teachings, personal experience, scriptural consistency, and the call to trust.

Ultimately, trusting God comes down to the historical person of Jesus. C. S. Lewis, speaking in 1942 and later publishing his argument in *Mere Christianity* in 1952, proposed that Jesus is a lunatic or a liar. If He is neither, He must be the Son of God. Christians trust in Jesus because they believe He is neither a liar or lunatic, but rather Lord and Savior.

Evaluate who and why we trust in the next election as we vote. Of greater importance, Romans 5:8 states, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us". Trust Jesus, as only He bridged the sin separation between humanity and a loving God.