



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

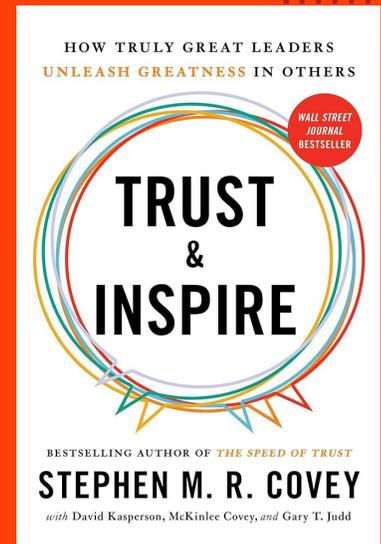
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THE NUTSHELL OF TRUST & INSPIRE

By Stephen M. R. Covey
Simon & Schuster 2022

Death Valley flowers slept for decades until six inches of rain awakened a carpet of color. People, too, hold dormant seeds of greatness that spring to life only under the right conditions. For generations most leaders have acted like machinists, coercing compliance through Command & Control, but the world has changed while that style has not. Work is collaborative brain-work, the office is anywhere, knowledge doubles every twelve hours, and five generations mingle on one team. Carrot-and-stick rituals that once squeezed effort now stifle it; we can manipulate or we can inspire.

Trust & Inspire is the new paradigm. It sees that people are whole-body, heart, mind, spirit; that they possess far more talent, creativity, ingenuity, intelligence, and ability than their jobs require; that enduring influence is created from the inside out. A Trust & Inspire leader models humility with courage, authenticity with vulnerability, empathy with performance. They extend smart trust, clear expectations and mutual accountability, because the best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them. They then fan the embers of purpose, meaning, and contribution until work



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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breathes significance. **Results and relationships are not a choice; they rise together.**

Stewardship agreements operationalize this mindset: agree on “what,” clarify guidelines, name resources, set self-guided accountability, and accept natural consequences. The agreement governs and converts bosses into coaches, employees into self-supervisors. People judge themselves tougher than any manager would dare, and trust becomes contagious.

Barriers appear: “this won’t work here,” fear of losing control, memories of betrayal, scarcity of credit, the reflex that says “this is who I am”, but each of these dissolves when someone decides to model first, then mentor. Janita proved it: one mid-level leader practiced Trust & Inspire with her team, performance soared, the ripple reached the CEO, and an entire culture tipped. The choice to trust became the seed of transformation.

In every context the pattern holds. Parents who act like gardeners cultivate children who govern themselves. Teachers who believe every student a leader unlock worlds beyond test scores. Coaches who persuade athletes they can be great multiply talent. Lawyers, soldiers, clergy, civic volunteers, any role flourishes when its steward moves from managing things to leading people. Bishop Myriel’s single act of mercy in *Les Misérables* rescripted Jean Valjean; one transition figure can change trajectories because he first changed himself.

Leadership is stewardship. You hold something precious, people and outcomes, on behalf of others. See the seed; communicate its worth; develop it with trust; unleash it with inspiration. Move from a scarcity mind-set to abundance, from “might is right” to “might for right,” from command to care, and watch dormant valleys bloom. The most powerful words any leader can speak are still: **I believe in you.**