

# Circles of trust: Give everyone the place they deserve

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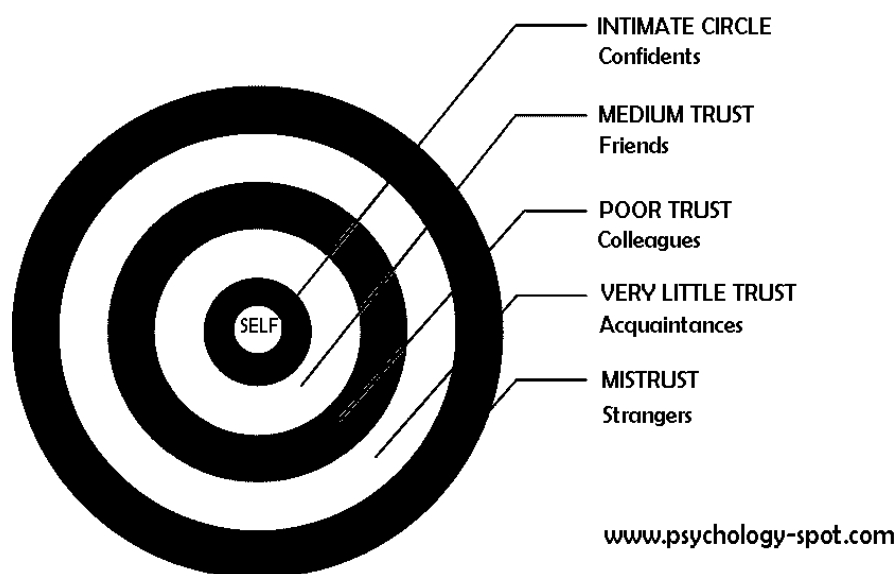
Over the years we meet many people. With some of them we will establish meaningful relationships and allow them to be part of our life. Of other people we will only keep a diffuse memory and of others not even that because the fleeting encounters did not give us time to even fix their faces in our memory. Thus, meeting after meeting, we are creating our circles of trust.

## What are the circles of trust in Psychology?

The circles of trust are a graphic way of representing the relationships we establish, placing the people we know in a series of concentric circles that differ from each other by the degree of trust, intimacy, attention and care we put into each of them. The circles of trust express, therefore, the type of relationship we establish with people and how close or far from us we perceive them.

## The circles of trust that make up our relationships

We are in the centre of that circle. From that “self” we are going to create different concentric circles in which we will place the people we know.



**1. Intimate circle.** This circle is formed by the most intimate people, those in whom we trust with our eyes closed, usually the partner, the children, parents and/or siblings. In that circle are those people we turn to when we have a big problem and to whom we entrust our biggest secrets and concerns. It is those people who take care of us when we get sick, who are by our side in the most difficult moments and who are always watching us.

**2. Circle of medium trust.** In this circle are those people with whom we have a close relationship, but not so much. They are people to whom we can ask for a favour, those with whom we spend time, have fun and share our vision of the world, so we can talk to them about many topics, some even delicate. In this circle you usually find friends and some relatives.

**3. Circle of poor trust.** This circle is made up of people with whom we have relationships, but to whom we would not tell them our secrets and would not dare to ask them for great favors or confess certain details of our lives. Generally, these are people with whom we maintain circumstantial relationships, such as the closest co-workers or far relatives.

**4. Circle of very little trust.** This circle is made up of people we know because we have agreed with them on different occasions, but with whom we have not established a proper relationship. It may be that neighbour we greet when leaving home, that person who works in another department of our company or the clerk of a store we usually go to.

**5. Circle of mistrust.** Outside those circles of trust are the “others”, unknown people with whom we have not established any kind of relationship or with whom we have exchanged a casual but inconsequential encounter. Generally, these people generate a certain degree of mistrust or suspicion since we do not know them.

#### **Large or restricted circles of trust: What is better for our psychological well-being?**

Every time we expand our circles of trust, including other people in them, we tear down a psychological wall and approach distances. Having at our side people we can trust is beneficial to our physical and mental health, not only because they will help us when we need it most but because their mere existence is a source of security and trust. Having solid support networks will allow us to better deal with adversity in life. No doubt.

However, allowing untrustworthy people to move into our innermost circle will expose us emotionally, leaving us vulnerable. If we allow toxic people to camp in our intimate circles we will be at their mercy and, sooner or later, their behaviour will end up taking their toll.

That means we must be more careful with the people we let into our intimacy. It is not about assuming a suspicious attitude or distrust *a priori* of otherness, closing ourselves in a circle so small that it threatens to suffocate us psychologically, but of being able to choose the people we want by our side in life, and not let it be life who randomly places someone next to us. It's about choosing those people who can bring out the best of us and, of course, become a person who also brings light to others.