



Building Family Trust in Your Ag Legacy

The Miller family has been raising cattle on their ranch for generations. Tensions rose when Michael, the youngest son, continued to question his father John's management decisions. Michael believed modern methods could improve efficiency. John was skeptical of change. One night, Michael and John had yet another heated argument after a bunch of steers got out due to a broken fence Michael had promised to fix. John's trust in Michael's responsibility wavered. The conflict grew, affecting everyone, including Michael's sister, Emily, who tried to mediate.

Feeling misunderstood, Michael sought advice from his grandmother, who shared stories of past conflicts resolved through trust and communication. Inspired, Michael approached John with a plan to earn back his trust. They agreed to combine traditional practices with modern techniques.

Over the following months, their collaboration paid off. Production levels and efficiency on the ranch improved, and so did their relationship. Trust was rebuilt, reinforcing the family's bond and commitment to their shared legacy.

Trust in Relationships

Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships between parents and adult children is challenging at any stage in life, especially during times of change. It's crucial for generations to work together with the goal of making relationships satisfying rather than strained.

Family relationships can carry over to the family business, while business relationships can, in turn, affect family dynamics. This is especially true on a family farm or ranch, where family members work together in high-stress situations far beyond the typical 8-5 workday.

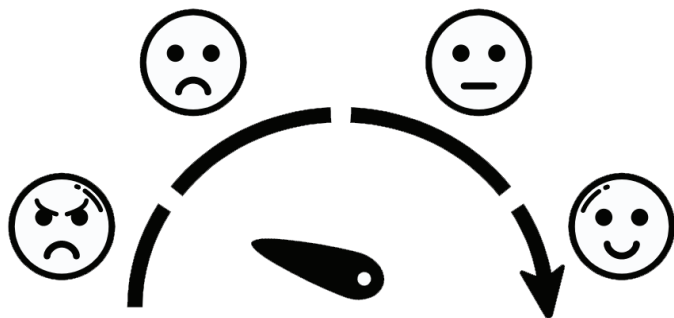
Building Trust in the Family

Building trust is essential for strengthening family relationships. Trust involves a firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. According to Rousseau et al., trust is more than just this belief; it also involves accepting vulnerability.

They define trust as “a positive psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.” By understanding and embracing these aspects of trust, family members can foster deeper, more resilient connections.

Differences in Values

Differences in values and beliefs can stress intergenerational relationships. Families with more agreement on money management, child-rearing, choice of friends and partners, religious beliefs, and other values experience less stress in their relationships. Building on common beliefs and interests can help. Trust is not easily given and is even harder to earn back once broken.



Barriers to building trust in relationships include:

- Desire to Control
- Dishonesty
- Self-Centeredness
- Lack of openness
- Communication
- Empathy
- Positive Feelings

Moving Beyond Trust to Building Healthy Relationships

Building healthy family relationships takes more than just trust. Here are additional suggestions for maintaining healthy relationships between adult children and their parents:

- Honesty
- Communication
- Validation of feelings and beliefs
- Respect one another
- Letting go
- Do not take all the credit/blame
- Choose for yourself

Healthy intergenerational relationships can provide individuals and families with knowledge, respect, and appreciation for one another. These skills of understanding provide a legacy to future generations who will also need to navigate life's transitions and stresses.



Inseparable

“A family farm is much more than a business; it’s an integral part of the family. For many farm families, losing the farm would be like losing a family member. There’s a tradition in agriculture of passing land from one generation to the next, yet the transfer of the family farm is one of the most stressful issues.

Families who sustain a culture of trust typically exhibit three common characteristics:

- Family members are reliable. They do what they say they will do.
- They demonstrate feelings of intimacy. They care about each other and they like being together.
- They are honest with each other. They have open, direct communication — they are willing to speak and to listen when difficult things need to be said.

A lack of communication is still communication

Action or inaction can speak volumes. Beginning the process of building or rebuilding trust may be as simple as a handshake and an invitation to talk. The other person may want the same thing but is unsure where to start or if anyone even cares. What is the status of your relationships? Make the decision today to begin evaluating and repairing your family relationships by opening communication and building trust among family members.

Online Modules

AGLEGACY.org hosts a set of online modules to allow individuals and families to explore legacy concepts further. Modules are available free of charge to all who are willing to register to participate (self-registration is available 24/7).

Modules, posted in Moodle courseware, offer the opportunity for individuals to engage anonymously around the topic of leaving a legacy. Sections of this module provide

AG LEGACY Best Practices

Best Practices: offers the chance to learn when others teach. In this section you will be able to review a recorded version of the live webinar and view the slides presented, complete with the speaker’s notes.



Trust and Relationships in an Ag Legacy

This online component offers the opportunity for individuals and families to engage anonymously around the topic of legacy. Sections of this module provide participants the chance to interact with one another, explore the topic of legacy and what it means, discuss strategies that work and those that have not, and test their knowledge about available resources.

participants the chance to interact with one another, explore the topic of leaving a legacy and what it means, discuss strategies that work and those that have not, and test their knowledge about available resources. Each module includes several components to allow participants to engage the topic from several different perspectives.

AG LEGACY Ideas to Build On

Ideas to Build On: offers the chance to learn by observing others. In this section you will have the opportunity to engage in a discussion forum. You will have the chance to share what has worked for you and to learn what strategies others have used and how they worked as you each react to the posted discussion questions.

Best Practices -

Best Practices begins with a short recorded presentation on the topic. Slides with narration is one format, but materials are also available in audio-only (MP3) format, as well as a version with the slides and accompanying narration as text, for those more comfortable reading the presentation offered. A short Q&A session offers participants the opportunity to hear others' questions and the presenter's response.

Ideas to Build On -

Ideas to Build On offers discussion questions for families or individuals to respond to. These responses might include relating what has worked for you or stories you have heard of techniques that have worked for others. In addition, you might also learn what strategies others have used and how they worked as you each react to the posted discussion questions.

AG LEGACY Tips for Success

Tips for Success: provides a chance for participants to teach others about strategies that have worked. In this section you can teach others about resources you are aware of, approaches you have tried and that have worked, or describe methods that families you are familiar with have used. In this way, you may uncover new ideas for yourself or help others refine an approach they might try.

AG LEGACY Practice

Practice: allows participants the chance to learn by practicing the concepts covered previously. Practice may include completing an assignment, submitting a document you've prepared for comment, or checking your knowledge level with a short quiz.

Tips for Success -

The Tips for Success section offers a set of AGLEGACY newsletters for further reading, as well as a chance to teach others about resources you are aware of, approaches you have tried and that have worked, or to describe methods that families you are familiar with have used. In this way, you may uncover new ideas for yourself or help others refine an approach they might try.

Practice -

Practice is a section that allows participants the chance to learn by practicing the concepts covered previously. Practice may include completing an assignment, submitting a document you've prepared for comment, or checking your knowledge level with a short quiz.

ACCESS:

To access the online module, point your browser to AGLEGACY.org. Click on the Modules tab (at the top) and select any module from the list with a Moodle icon. 

Click a title to begin your registration process if you have never registered for an Ag Legacy module before. Then click the Create New Account button to enter your registration information. An email message will be sent to the address you enter that includes a link allowing you to finalize your registration once you complete the form. Now login and enjoy your AGLEGACY online module!

