

“Tangible Trust” Week 4: Practices that Build Trust

Picking Your Influences, Part B

What does it mean to Pick Your Influences?

If you haven't yet, go back and read last week's practice, "Picking Your Influences, Part A" to learn what it means to pick your influences.

How to Pick Your Influences: Taking Action

Part One: Evaluating Your Influences

Begin with prayer. Ask God to re-orient you towards His heart for your life.

- Take out your "Paying Attention" lists from last week and your "Reflecting" answers from this week and put them side-by-side
- Re-read your first Reflecting prompt, and then identify which items on your Paying Attention lists help you towards the answer to your prompt and which ones make it harder.
- Repeat for all three prompts. If you find it helpful, you can use the table below*.
 - While you're sorting through, you may find there are influences that don't fit any category and that's okay, you can leave those alone for now.

Part Two: Making Adjustments

Once you've gone through all the prompts, pick at least one unhelpful influence from each category to address. There are many great strategies to making these adjustments, but remember that these things take time and effort. So do your best to be realistic and intentional with the changes you want to make. Here are some examples to get you started:

- Explore different news sources.
 - If you find it hard to have grace for a certain group of people, closely following a news source that reinforces your frustrations can make loving them even harder than it needs to be. Try out a few different news channels, media accounts, or newspapers to see what other voices are out there. You may find that you need to move away from a source completely, or you may find it helpful just to add a few new voices in your rotation to keep your influences well balanced.
- Substitute a social media account you follow.
 - It is rare that we follow someone online for no reason; we might follow because we enjoy the humor, or find the information helpful, or feel connected to something we love. So when we unfollow an account, it can leave a bit of a space behind. So when you decide you need to unfollow something, it can be a lot easier to stick to that decision when it is replaced with something similar that is healthier for you. A great place to start is by looking at the helpful influences in your "What I need from God" section, are there similar accounts you can follow or podcasts you can listen to?
- Set some screen time restrictions.
 - Sometimes, we don't even realize how much time we're spending on screens. Fortunately, there are many apps and resources that track your time on your various devices. Quick google could help you find something that's right for you!
- Pick some healthier go-to conversation topics ahead of time.
 - If you find that you keep having the same destructive conversations over and over again, it might help to plan out some healthier things you could talk about before that conversation happens again. For example, if you find you are constantly complaining about your job with coworkers, you could make note of something fun that happened over your weekend, and be ready to share that next time you're in the breakroom.

After you've decided which adjustments you'd like to make, spend some time in prayer. Asking for God's guidance and strength in making these changes. If you feel it will be helpful, you can also share your decisions with someone you trust and ask them to be praying for you.

* Evaluation Table

Prompt	Helpful Influences	Unhelpful Influences
I want to be known as somebody who...		
What I need most from God in this season of my life is...		
It's easier for me to love people well when...		