

Pass It On®... Earning Trust

Nancy was suddenly a single mother. Her husband of 17 years passed away leaving her with kids to finish raising and no savings. Nancy was from a hardworking family but she lacked skills. Desperate for work she answered an ad for a housecleaner. The house turned out to be a luxury apartment, one of many properties the eccentric owner moved between as he went about his International business. The interview was short. A little paperwork and an assignment: clean the apartment. Anxious to impress, Nancy got right to work thoroughly turning over cushions, vacuuming the hidden places, scrubbing down the tiled places and not cutting corners on cleaning the windows. The first handful of change she found in the couch. The second she found under the bed. A few crumpled dollar bills and some coins could not mean much to such a rich man who seemed to be nonchalant with his spare change. But a few dollars to Nancy would mean she could come home with a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread. She smoothed the paper dollars and placed them in an ashtray and stacked the coins on top. When she was done cleaning, she left the apartment and locked the door behind her.

Dr. Brené Brown, a leading authority on human behavior, outlined the Seven Elements of Trust. Integrity is at the center. "You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them."

Nancy returned home to hungry and anxious kids. She remembered the lessons taught by her immigrant father: work hard, be honest. But the words didn't put food on the table. The next day, Nancy got the job. Turns out the scattered money was the interview. Anybody can clean but few can be trusted. Nancy made enough money to take care of her family. And she became a confidant of her eccentric employer. He soon promoted her to his bookkeeper. And as time went by, she was trusted with finding the right legal and financial counsel. In every task there are the same elements: don't cut corners, check the details everybody else passes over. Stick to your values. Nancy became a trusted personal assistant. To her,

managing millions of dollars was like a handful of coins, something to be trusted with to the penny. It's been over 30 years since that first job interview for Nancy. In that time she has had the financial stability she needed to raise her family. And she's had the peace of mind that comes from being somebody who can be trusted.

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By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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