

CHAPTER 1

What am I doing here?

This is the question many leaders (including me) have asked ourselves, head-in-hands, on those really difficult days.

These are the days when things just seem to be going sideways or backwards and when, despite our best efforts to communicate, we might as well be speaking Chinese to a French audience.

At some point in their careers, most leaders I have met have sat slumped in their chairs, staring plaintively at the paper snowstorm on their desk or vaguely off into the distance hoping that somehow, somewhere, someone will help them answer some of the following questions:

- How do I talk to my staff?
- How do I get them to understand and do what I need?
- How do I build morale?
- How can I get them to trust me?
- Am I the problem?
- How do I know when I am right?

- How can I deal with ‘problem’ employees?
- Why do I feel so bad when I have to fire someone?
- How do I deal with my difficult boss?
- Why don’t they like me?

These questions seem to be part of a shared experience of the frustration of leadership and as a result, *Naked Leadership*[®] has been developed with the intent of providing solid, reliable answers and techniques to deal with these issues. Is this how you imagined being a leader would feel? Wasn’t it supposed to be much easier? Have you found that all of those people who were cheering you on now have a different agenda?

In this book and in Book 2, *The Naked Leader’s Coaching Toolkit*, we will explore all of these questions and more, but we will also discover that helping people to perform – even difficult people – does not have to be painful.

Reality check: Don’t worry if you’re not a JFK-like figure leading your co-workers into the new millennium.

If you bought this book hoping to find out how famous leaders ‘wheel and deal’ or win wars single-handed or climb mountains on the strength of their will power alone, you will be disappointed.

That is because few if any of these stories are true. No leader does anything entirely by him/herself, and even if they were able to, it would have little relevance for the everyday leader.

In order to be a leader, you have to have someone to lead and they may not share your view of the world, your motivation or understanding about why things need to be done your way.

They will have their own concerns, needs, desires and fears. Unless you find a way to address these, you will struggle.

Too many leaders become preoccupied with being popular rather than effective. Those who know they don’t have the personality to be