

CHAPTER 3

Is it meant to be this hard?

What is it about leading people that drives so many of us up the wall?

Dealing with a diverse group of people in any work environment (unless one is incredibly lucky) inevitably brings questions:

- that lead to frustration, stress, self-doubt, fear, career anxiety and, in many cases quitting, or worse, submitting; and
- that cause us to doubt our judgement and second-guess our instincts.

I'm talking about questions like:

- How come 98% of my team are great, but the 2% of troublemakers drive me nuts?
- Why do I feel like a babysitter to grown adults?
- Are they really that stupid or are they playing me?
- Why do the hardcore idiots frustrate me so much?
- How do I get through to these people?

NAKED LEADERSHIP

- Is this monumental stupidity or something else?
- Why do I feel intimidated by that aggressive employee, my boss and the union representative?
- How can I make performance reviews, coaching and discipline less stressful?
- Why can't people just get on with their jobs and stop making work for me?
- Why doesn't my boss respect me as a leader?
- How can I survive office politics?

If any of these questions has crossed your mind, you are not alone.

If none of them has, you're either naturally talented (lucky you!), heavily medicated, the boss's offspring or deeply in denial.

So why do many humans have so much difficulty successfully leading others? Why is it that what seems like a straightforward job gets so complicated?

I sometimes suspect that it's because some people have a vested interest in making it *seem* complicated, so that they can make money!

Perhaps that is why there are literally thousands of books on leadership theory, courses at universities, colleges, websites and articles on the Internet, infomercials, CDs and probably a herbal supplement somewhere. It's almost like the frenzy surrounding diets and physical appearance.

- There is a veritable buffet of information on what to eat, what not to eat, how to exercise, what bits to get lopped off or implanted, sucked out or pumped in, and yet many of us keep getting fatter. (It's also sad/amusing how so many so-called experts violently disagree with each other...)
- Similarly, we have never had more information on leadership, yet a poor relationship with their immediate supervisor remains at the top of the list of reasons employees leave a company...