

# Virtually **NAKED**

Follow-on skills and refreshing ideas  
for Graduates and Friends of

**NAKED LEADERSHIP®**

**Issue 32**

## A few good men... (and women)

Sometimes we leaders are so busy leading our people that we forget that we must, from time to time, lead our leaders.

Leaders and in particular, front-line leaders and location managers are most often very good judges of what needs to be done for, or with, their people.

Getting what is needed done, will often involve negotiating with our boss in order to gain the support or resources that we need. But what happens when the boss doesn't agree?

This is where it pays to have all of your 'ducks in a row'. In other words to have done your research, by polling other leaders to find out if this issue is unique to your operation and having examined the situation from your boss's point of view in order to understand what challenges this may present for them.

Many mid-level leaders make the mistake of complaining about things but not presenting an alternative when they want changes made. When employees do this to us, we may get impatient with their whinging but then we go ahead and do the same thing to our boss.

Another trap front-line or mid-level leaders fall into, is believing that if they point out problems or ask for things, that they will be 'marked' for the rest of their career.

This fear of 'being marked' does not arise if your boss is a Naked Leader. Naked Leaders are open to feedback, even if it is uncomfortable or delivered in a less than ideal way. We always look for the gold nugget amongst the rocks thrown at us. That is the essence of our purpose.

If your boss is a Naked Leader you should be fine, but what happens if your boss is that little bit insecure or even downright hostile to anything they didn't think of themselves?

Whenever front-line leaders get together for meetings, time should always be set aside to discuss problems 'at the coal face'.

What is happening for one is

usually happening in some form for others but often we do not want to be seen to be complaining or to not be able to handle it, so we sit there like the three wise monkeys and *see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil*.

The challenge is that this helps no-one. Even if the issues are confined to one location, we can all learn from what is happening.

We as leaders must lead each other *and* our boss, not just our people and that means we must be willing to speak up. There is no point accepting feedback from our people if we are not willing to pass it up the line. This lacks integrity because at some point they will ask us what happened and we will have to admit that we have done nothing, or worse, make weak excuses for our inaction.

WE MUST BE WILLING TO SPEAK UP AND RAISE ISSUES!

**All it takes for evil (or mediocrity and discontent) to triumph - is for good men to do nothing...**

Edmund Burke

(Parentheses comments mine)

So, what happens if you have the kind of boss who doesn't want to know? Or worse, the one who tries to suppress your efforts?

It's time to 'rally the troops'...Well actually, time to gather your peers for a joint effort. Remember what the unions know - they can't fire **all** of you or the business will come to a screeching halt.

Now, this is only appropriate when your cries for help have been ignored, *not* as a first move.

Make a time to speak with your boss. Carefully plan and present your argument using FACE™ to help you and then ask for their help. If you get resistance, make it clear that **all** of you feel this way and that this needs to be resolved for the good of the business and your customers.

Stand together on this, calmly but firmly, and ask for a commitment to resolve the issue within a specific time. Offer to help in any

way you can but make it clear that this is not going away.

If your boss resists or is hostile, thank them for their time and go up to the next level. I have found often that the General Manager or CEO is unaware that the Senior Manager is acting inappropriately or holding up this process.

Often, just the willingness to proceed will get you the result you need, but always remember to be **firm but diplomatic**. Threats are counterproductive. Avoid letting your collective egos drive the process. Remember who it is about and give your boss as many reasons as possible to agree with you.

To prevent these meetings from turning into a whinge-fest, simply apply your **FACE™** tool to the problem at hand.

Identify the **FACTS** of the situation, then the **AIMS**, both overall and specific. Then get **CLARIFICATION** around the real issues or challenges and the range of suggestions for handling them. Then move on to the **EXPECTATIONS** both for support from your boss and peers and from your people...

I have seen spectacular results from a group of united leaders who have had the courage to tackle an important issue.

Very often, bosses will acknowledge these efforts from their leaders, but if not, sometimes a 'Naked' CEO may move a senior manager on if they can't accept feedback from, and then help their front-line leaders. After all, that is their job, plain and simple.

**Even so, remember that you will not always get what you want.**

**As the old saying goes, "Some days you get the bear and some days the bear gets you" but unless you have the moral courage to collectively stand up for what is right, you will never be truly Naked...**