



## Topics:

- Women and children first, after me
- Know thyself
- There's more than one way to skin a cat
- On second thoughts ...
- Back to front
- Who are we?
- Captain, my captain
- It takes guts, but ask them
- Can a leopard change its spots?



## Women and children first, after me

Leadership is practised not so much in words as in attitudes and actions.

Leadership cannot really be taught. It can only be learned.

Harold Geneen, CEO, IT&T, *Managing* (Doubleday, 1984)

Contrary to the opinion of many people, leaders are not born. Leaders are made, and they are made by effort and hard work.

Vince Lombardi, 1913-1970, Professional football coach, Wiebusch, *Lombardi* (Follett, 1971)“

**Leader – ‘The leading horse or dog in a team’** is one of the definitions from the *Collins English Dictionary*. Now, I am not sure how many horses or dogs will be reading this, so let’s try another definition from the same dictionary for the word ‘lead’ – ‘Show the way by going with or ahead.’

Unbeknown to most of you who are out there quietly or loudly practicing leadership in the real world, there is an ongoing debate about leadership amongst academics, management consultants and other purveyors of the leadership publishing and training industry. Are leaders born or can they be made?

Who knows? Who cares? The above-mentioned group may not know, but believe me they do care. After all, we are talking about a worldwide multi-billion dollar industry here.

If you ask this question of a management consultant / trainer who is in the business of providing leadership-training programs, how do you think they would answer? Do not hold your breath waiting for them to tell you that leaders are born, not made.

Digressing for a moment, many of the notions about leadership are derived from the battlefield (and, equally inappropriately, from the sporting arena) where acts of leadership are more readily obvious and easier to define. Transferring these notions into the context of the workplace presents several difficulties. Not the least being that in a combat situation, there are many different factors at play, which cause soldiers to behave in certain ways, which can have nothing to do with the inspirational qualities, or lack of, of the leader.

These include fear of death or injury; a desire to avoid being shot or court-martialed by their own officers for deemed cowardice; a desire to avoid the stigma of being branded a coward; a desire to not let down their mates; a burning desire to show their patriotism; a belief that the cause is just and worth the sacrifice of their life; anger and hatred bred by the death of a mate or the killing of innocent civilians; a pathological desire to maim and kill; or not wanting to live with the self-imposed guilt of not behaving admirably on the battlefield; or simply a desire to kill before they are killed - the powerful instinct for self-preservation.

Combat veterans know that there are many examples of officers who were trained in the world’s best military academies who proved incompetent in the battlefield, unfortunately to the extreme detriment of their troops. The worst example of this being the pointless slaughter of hundreds of thousands of British and Australian troops in the First World War due to incompetence, arrogance, ignorance, ego and pride, primarily under the ultimate leadership of British generals.



On the other side of the coin, the 'leaders are born' brigade are pushing the idea of a leadership gene. If that were so, you might expect that there would be many instances where the sons and daughters, and grandsons and grand-daughters of great leaders also excelled at leadership. If you think about it you will be able to cite examples where this is so. However, you will also be able to cite examples where this is not so.

And good leaders come in all shapes, sizes and appearances.

Back to the question. To my way of thinking anybody can be a leader provided they are capable of taking actions which guide or direct or support or inspire behaviour depending on the circumstances. Leadership is defined in the eyes of the followers by the actions the leader performs. Maybe some people instinctively or inherently know how to do these things while others have to be shown. Many managers are ineffective as leaders because they don't know how to act as leaders or they don't have the desire to act as leaders.

We don't attempt to answer the question about leaders being born or made for two simple reasons. One. We don't know. Two. We think it is immaterial. We believe that if you apply the actions described in these tools you will be demonstrating leadership behaviours in the eyes of your people. Both you and your people will experience leadership.

Leadership can be conducted at two levels – macro and micro. Unless you are part of the executive management team, much of your leadership in your workplace will be micro leadership. These tools focus more on micro leadership.



## Know thyself

**How do other people experience your leadership behaviour?** There is a term used in psychology, *cognitive dissonance*, which is the difference between how we see ourselves and how we actually are. The difference between our self-image and the reality.

If your desired self-image and the actual you are very close, you will more likely to have inner peace. If your desired self-image is far removed from the actual you, you will tend to have more inner conflict, more inner tension.

As a leader, you have an image of yourself. You may think other people perceive you this way and therefore you expect them to react to you in a certain way. If there is a difference between how you perceive yourself and how your people see you, your effectiveness as a leader will be diminished.

A useful trait for a leader is a high level of self-awareness. **How aware are you of your assets and liabilities as a leader?** Here is a checklist to conduct a self-assessment. Or, to make this really powerful, ask your people to assess you and compare the results to check your degree of cognitive dissonance. This will take a dose of courage on your part, but the reality is that people already know your assets and liabilities as a leader through experience.

|    |                                      |   |   |   |   |                              |   |   |   |    |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|---|---|---|----|
| 1. | Avoids tough decisions               |   |   |   |   | Makes tough decisions        |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2. | Decisions take too long              |   |   |   |   | Decisions are made on time   |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3. | Doesn't listen to people's opinions  |   |   |   |   | Listens to people's opinions |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4. | Takes no action on people's opinions |   |   |   |   | Acts on people's opinions    |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5. | Insensitive to others                |   |   |   |   | Sensitive to others          |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 6. | Not trusted by others                |   |   |   |   | Trusted by others            |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 7. | Ignores non-performance              |   |   |   |   | Resolves non-performance     |   |   |   |    |
|    | 1                                    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                            | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

# Execute Leadership



1

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 8.  | Unclear and ambiguous in communication             | Clear and explicit in communication        |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 9.  | Closed to new ideas                                | Open to new ideas                          |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 10. | Treats people unequally                            | Treats people equally                      |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 11. | Has no awareness of impact on others               | Is aware of impact on others               |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 12. | Creates Disengagement                              | Creates Engagement                         |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 13. | No awareness of assets and liabilities             | Aware of assets and liabilities            |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 14. | Stifles people                                     | Allows people to grow and develop          |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 15. | Dishonest  | Honest                                     |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 16. | Discourages creativity and innovation              | Encourages creativity and innovation       |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 17. | Does not provide direction and support when needed | Provides direction and support when needed |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |
| 18. | No recognition and feedback                        | Gives recognition and feedback             |
|     | 1      2      3      4      5                      | 6      7      8      9      10             |

# Execute Leadership



1

|     |                              |   |   |   |   |                               |   |   |   |    |
|-----|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|---|---|---|----|
| 19. | Avoids conflict              |   |   |   |   | Resolves conflict             |   |   |   |    |
|     | 1                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                             | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 20. | Is not respected as a leader |   |   |   |   | Is well respected as a leader |   |   |   |    |
|     | 1                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                             | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

## HOW DID YOU GO?

175 - 200 You are nearly the perfect leader.

150 - 174 You really enjoy being a leader, don't you? And you're very good at it.

125 - 149 You are a pretty good leader with scope for improvement.

100 - 124 Not real hot. A fair bit of work to do here.

75 - 99 Phew. A hell of a lot of work to do here.

74 or less Being a leader is not really your bag, is it?

Take each item where you scored 6 or less. Set yourself 3-5 personal development goals. For each issue, list some things you could do to show improvement in that area. Practise these things frequently.





## There's more than one way to skin a cat

*Our problems are man-made; therefore they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings.*

JOHN F. KENNEDY, address, The American University, Washington, D.C. June 10, 1963

*Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.*

HENRY J. KAISER (1862-1967)

**One of the key requirements** of leadership is making decisions. A leader who makes poor decisions could be as bad as the leader who makes no decisions.

The most common failing in decision-making is to jump to the first obvious solution. To “do it now!” is a commendable philosophy, but only after the desired outcome and the many choices and their associated consequences have been clearly explored. Perhaps the second most common failing is not to make a decision at all.

We make decisions to solve problems. Here is a step-by-step approach to solving problems and making decisions.

### STEP ONE - IDENTIFY AND DEFINE THE PROBLEM

- Beware of snap judgements
- Don't mistake a symptom for the problem
- Sift through the symptoms to find the cause
- Look for the root cause - ask “why, why, why?”
- Brainstorm ideas for clarifying the real problem

### STEP TWO - ANALYSE THE PROBLEM

- Obtain the facts of the problem (who, what, where, how, why, when)
- Explore opinions / attitudes and beware of assumptions and inferences
- Explore any constraints that may exist
- Check for underlying or hidden causes
- If necessary, re-define the problem

### STEP THREE - DEFINE THE DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Be clear about what you want to see happen

### STEP FOUR - CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES

- Generate a number of alternative, possible solutions
- Be creative and innovative - think laterally, hypothetically, out of left field
- Keep an open mind - accept all options at this stage



- Don't overlook simple alternatives or the alternative of doing nothing
- Involve those who will implement the decision

## **STEP FIVE - EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES AND DECIDE**

- Weigh up the pros and cons of each alternative discarding any which will not achieve the desired outcomes
- Consider the consequences of the decision you make on all stakeholders.
- Consider factors such as feasibility, company policy, ethics, resource availability and cost, likely opposition, level of authority needed for implementation, who else will be affected, what could go wrong, what further problems could be created and staff and customer acceptance

## **STEP SIX - ACT ON YOUR DECISION**

- Remember that change can be disturbing to staff and customers.
- Plan how your decision will be implemented (who, how, what, where and when)
- Communicate with all those affected by the decision in advance of the implementation stage - make sure you give reasons and answer any questions truthfully
- Work at getting active support and participation in the implementation of the decision

## **STEP SEVEN - FOLLOW UP AND EVALUATE THE DECISION**

- Don't let your ego make you blind to unsatisfactory results
- Correct errors and modify the decision if necessary
- Maintain contact with those involved to provide support and to follow through on suggestions, requests, etc.
- Check that the desired outcomes are achieved
- Note successful ideas to use again and errors to avoid





## On second thoughts...

Paul Kruger (1825 – 1904), President of the Transvaal, once decided a dispute between two brothers about an inheritance of land in South Africa by announcing, “Let one brother divide the land, and let the other have first choice.”

Edward Frank Allen, *Modern Humour for Effective Speaking* (Citadel, 1945).

A wise man sometimes changes his mind, but a fool never.

Arabic proverb.

Nothing creates more self-respect among employees than being included in the process of making decisions.

Judith M. Bardwick, University of California at San Diego, *The Plateauing Trap* (Amacom, 1986).

**Leaders need to be decisive.** Who calls the shots in your workgroup? When do you lead and make the decision? When do you let your workgroup make the decision? How effective are you as a decision maker according to your workgroup? Is everybody clear on who has responsibility for making decisions? How much autonomy do you give to your people when it comes to making decisions? (Or are you struggling with, “I can’t decide whether I am decisive or not.”).

Here are some actions to lead an improvement in decision-making within your workgroup - not in any particular order. Be guided by your own circumstances.

- Identify, discuss and agree the types of decisions to be made at the workgroup level and/or by key individuals.
- Identify and agree the areas of accountability for decision making within the workgroup.
- Identify and agree the levels of authority that people have in relation to making decisions.
- Explore with your workgroup why and what decisions they may be unwilling to make.
- Discuss your workgroup’s perception of the consequences of making a wrong decision.
- Discuss examples of how to make significant decisions with your workgroup.
- Train your people in how to use a decision making process. Refer to ‘There’s more than one way to skin a cat.’ (Not literally. Leave cats and their skin connected).
- Train people in how to think beyond the obvious issues – show them questions to ask which force them to think differently.
- Identify and agree the needs and interests of all stakeholders who could be affected by a decision.
- Discuss with your workgroup their perception of their decision making responsibility.
- Identify and explore situations where people did not make decisions expected by you.
- Agree with your workgroup why it is important that they take more responsibility for making decisions.
- Provide feedback to your workgroup on the quality and effectiveness of their decision making.

# Execute Leadership



1

- Discuss with your workgroup the consequences of the options available in relation to a particular decision.
- Discuss with your workgroup the consequences of not making a decision.
- Explain the context and rationale behind decisions that you have made.
- Agree the types of decisions where input from the workgroup is desirable.
- Agree the types of decisions which you will make without input from the workgroup.
- Agree the nature of the support your people need from you or others to improve their decision making willingness and competence.



## Back to front

The superior man encourages people to approach him, by his readiness to receive them.

I Ching : Book of Changes. China, c. 600 BC

To lead the people, walk behind them.

Lao-Tzu, c. 604-c. 531 BC, Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism, Tao Te Ching.

Use your own best judgement at all times.

Nordstrom Corp. Entire contents of \$1.9 billion company's Policy Manual.

**Yesterday's supervisor is today's frontline or first-line leader.** Is this just a new word to describe the same role? Not quite. Today's supervisor - frontline or first-line leader - has a broader role than she or he had in the past. It is probably a sign of the devolution of management and leadership authority and decision making down to lower levels in the organisation. This has come about as the realisation spreads that the people closer to the 'coalface' are better placed to handle some of the traditional leadership functions previously reserved for managers higher up the corporate tree.

So what are the functions of frontline leaders? The focus these days is less on the technical aspects of the work. It is more on providing direction and support and facilitating the performance of the group and individuals.

**Here is a checklist of the role and functions of the frontline leader. Many of these functions are best done in partnership with team members.**

- Establishing work goals and standards of performance for team members.
- Planning work allocation and identifying priorities.
- Planning work organisation.
- Planning staff requirements for particular jobs.
- Clarifying work roles, functions, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Organising and co-ordinating the work of staff.
- Assessing staff training needs.
- Creating an environment where staff are able to learn from each other and apply creativity and innovation in the way we do things.
- Providing on-the-job training and coaching.
- Initiating off-the-job training activities and actively supporting and managing the application of new skills in the workplace.
- Identifying and supplying staff and management requirements for information.
- Applying safe working practices and identifying and eliminating hazards.
- Identifying and dealing with staff complaints and grievances.



- Providing recognition and feedback to staff.
- Developing teamwork.
- Providing direction and support to the team.
- Monitoring staff performance.
- Counselling and disciplining problem employees.
- Identifying and dealing with workplace conflict.
- Reviewing the way we work as a team.
- Ensuring that internal and external communication is timely, accurate and sufficient.
- Identifying the problems, needs and concerns of the work group.
- Communicating the problems and concerns of staff to management.
- Incorporating the ideas and suggestions of staff to continuously improve systems and procedures and work practices.
- Communicating the ideas and suggestions of staff to higher management and policy and system designers.
- Identifying causes of low morale or low motivation and acting to address them.
- Facilitating the implementation of change and continuous improvement.
- Improving the quality of products and services to internal and external customers.
- Managing team performance to achieve goals and outcomes.

**How effectively are you doing these things? Scarier still, ask your people where they would like to see more focus.**



## Who are we?

True freedom is not the absence of structure – letting employees go off and do whatever they want – but rather a clear structure that enables people to work within established boundaries in an autonomous and creative way.

Erich Fromm, Psychologist, philosopher and writer, *Escape from Freedom* (Rinehart, 1941).

Most organisations, left to their own devices, are going to atrophy, to get so institutional, so bureaucratic, that they get to the point where their original reason for existence has been lost, and they stagnate. So you have to have change, and by that I mean dramatic change.

William G McGowan, Chairman, MCI Communications Corp, Inc. Magazine, August 1986.

**If you don't have a statement of mission and roles for your workgroup** and you would like to take the lead in developing one, here are a number of issues that you could consider. You might do it first as a draft and then involve your workgroup for their input or involve your workgroup from the beginning.

Good leadership involves making sure that all of your people have a shared perception of the big picture. If you choose to involve your people from the start, reproduce the relevant questions, allow space for responses and distribute to your people giving them time to respond. In a group session, collate the responses and produce a document that you can refer to from time to time and update as circumstances change.

- What business is the total organisation in? Why does it exist?
- What business is our unit in? Why do we exist?
- Who are our unit's primary and secondary customers/clients/users? Are we principally a production or support operation or both?
- What are our unit's principal products / services / functions?
- How do these products / services / functions contribute to the total organisation's mission and roles?
- What is different about our unit's business from what it was 2 – 3 years ago?
- What will / should be different about our unit's business 2 – 3 years in the future?
- What is our unit's principal economic base (profit centre / self-sustaining / cost centre / separately funded and how / part of a larger cost centre / assigned budget, etc)?
- What should be the nature of our economic commitment to the total organisation?
- What is unique or distinctive about our unit's work as compared with that of other units in the organisation?
- What other units are our key suppliers of products or services to us?



- What philosophical issues are important to our unit (related to organisational image, leadership in profession / industry, environment, local community, equal employment opportunity, operational strategies, innovation / risk taking, safety, state-of-the-art, quality, continuous improvement, organisation structure, leadership and management approach, etc)?
- What special considerations do we have in regard to:
  - a) Owners/stockholders?
  - b) Upper management?
  - c) Employees?
  - d) Customers/clients/users?
  - e) Suppliers?
  - f) Other organisations or units?
  - g) General public?
  - h) Others (Specify)?





## Captain, my captain

If you lead the people with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?

Confucious, c.551-c.479 BC, Chinese philosopher and teacher

A rotting fish begins to stink at the head

Italian proverb

**There are some managers who are better leaders than others.** What do they do that sets them apart from the pack? Is it a natural set of qualities they possess or can we learn to be better team leaders?

Here are some very specific actions you can do which will help you be a better team leader and improve teamwork:

- Identify team members' strengths and utilise these to the benefit of the whole team.
- Seek regular feedback from team members about your actions and what you could do more of by way of leadership.
- Clarify the role and authority of each member of the team making sure each person knows exactly what they have to do.
- Clarify how individual roles impact on others within the team.
- Convey unpopular decisions to the team by providing the rationale for the thinking behind the decision and the benefits to the team as a whole.
- Involve team members in establishing team goals.
- Provide clear direction to the team by holding regular team meetings, reinforcing the objectives, purpose, standards and results of the team's work.
- Identify the nature of the direction and support team members require from you, and provide it.
- Ensure that communication within the team is accurate, timely and relevant.
- Act to resolve any conflict within the team or incidents of unacceptable performance.
- Check that you demonstrate the types of behaviours you wish team members to adopt.
- Regularly review how well we are functioning as a team
- Identify and act to resolve obstacles to team effectiveness.
- Demonstrate consistency when handling team issues by displaying the same response to the same situation but at the same time being aware of individual differences.
- Discuss team successes and the positive contributions of team members.
- Promote 'we thinking' instead of 'me thinking'.
- Explore the need for and discuss the benefits of improving co-operation / collaboration.

# Execute Leadership



1

- Identify and discuss how what we each do contributes to the workflow process for others in the team.
- Initiate discussions about what we need to do to help others do their job to the required standard.
- Explore and implement new, different and better ways to help us achieve others' requirements of us.
- Identify where and when better co-operation / collaboration is needed between individuals or areas.
- Promote a willingness to help our fellow team members in performing their individual and team tasks.
- Provide feedback when co-operation / collaboration is poor or breaking down.
- Inform people in other areas about any changes / issues that will directly or indirectly affect them.
- Acknowledge and thank team members who work to improve co-operation / collaboration.
- Analyse what we do that might be counter-productive to co-operation / collaboration.
- Explore and implement the best ways to change the way we do things to improve co-operation / collaboration
- Check that the new changes now become a standard practice for the way we work as a team.
- Discuss with senior management the support required to implement changes to improve co-operation / collaboration.

# Execute Leadership



1

## It takes guts, but ask them

Impulse manages all affairs badly

Portuguese proverb

**I've never yet met a manager** who believes that they do a lousy job as a leader. I've met hundreds of staff who believe that their manager is incompetent as a leader. (And yes the converse applies as well).

How do managers know how well they are leading their people? One way to find out is to ask the people who are being lead. Simple, but scary. Probably not a good idea for the egomaniacs (they would dismiss any negative feedback anyway) or those people with low self-esteem.

On the other hand, it is not an easy process for staff either. Should I be honest? How will he take it? Can she handle it? Will he hold it against me? Will I suffer in some way?

Some managers believe (incorrectly) that to ask staff for this sort of feedback about their own performance destroys their credibility. Every manager can benefit from holding a 'Leadership Review Meeting' every 12 months with their staff.

Here is a process which can make this easier for both the manager and your staff. Explain that you would like constructive feedback about your performance as a leader. Ask your staff to complete the following five statements. Ask that they be fair and balanced.



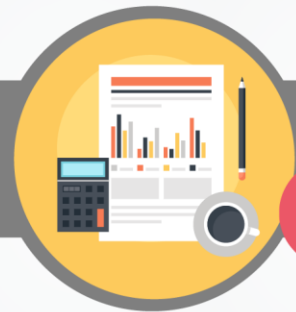
To enable me to achieve my objectives and to perform my job more effectively, I would like you (the manager) to:

1. **CONTINUE DOING** these things.... (Here they describe things you do which demonstrate effective leadership and which they would like to see continued).
2. **DO MORE** of these things....(Here they list things you do occasionally which demonstrate effective leadership, but which they would like to see you do more often).
3. **START DOING** these things....(Here they list those things which demonstrate effective leadership, but which you aren't currently doing).
4. **DO LESS** of these things.... (Here they list those things which you do which lessen your leadership effectiveness, but which you do for other reasons).
5. **STOP DOING** these things.... (Here they describe those things which you do which damage your leadership effectiveness and for which they believe that there is no valid reason)

To make this process one of equal participation, the manager can complete similar statements in relation to staff performance. You can do this one-on-one or together as a group. During the meeting, the manager and staff make note of the actions described during this exchange, discuss reasons for current actions and make commitments for change.

For those leaders who can take it, this can be a very rewarding, beneficial and enriching experience. The point is that your people are aware of your personal assets and liabilities as a leader anyway. They are already known to them. They may not be known to you. You are just putting in the public domain what people are thinking privately anyway. If you can't accept that your execution will sometimes be flawed (as is the case for all of us), even if your intentions are honourable, don't use this process.

Just the act of doing this exercise with your people will show you as a remarkable leader



## Can a leopard change its spots?

*We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done.*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



**Effective leadership and trust go hand in hand.** You can't have one without the other.

Some leaders work in an environment where their level of trust, respect and credibility has been damaged because of the way they have treated people in the past. Is it too late to learn? Is it too late to change? Is it too late to win back the trust, respect and credibility?

If your relationship with your people has been damaged by past events and you're happy to maintain that situation - so be it. However, if you are of the view that it's never too late, then these tools will show you hundreds of ways to turn that situation around. But it won't happen overnight.

There is only one way to begin to win back the trust, respect and credibility. That is to speak honestly with your people about the current situation and what you want to do about it and why. You will probably have to eat some 'humble pie'. To pretend that the past hasn't happened will be folly. Your credibility in recovering lost trust will be lost immediately. It is important that you acknowledge the past so you and others can move on. Many people will forgive past acts if the person acknowledges his or her mistakes honestly and shows a genuine desire to make amends.

Here is a range of things you might say at a meeting with your team (or individually to your team members) to begin a discussion about what you are planning. Say these in your own style, but don't change the meaning of the message you want to convey:

- "Look. In the past, I've stabbed you in the back, betrayed your trust, taken the credit for your work, embarrassed you in public, played favourites, ignored your problems, sacked your workmates because I didn't like them, sexually harassed a couple of you, bullied you, underpaid you, lied to you, made life hell, but, what I want to know is... are we still friends?"





Just kidding. Seriously:

- “You, me, everybody does the best they can at any given moment according to our belief system – what beliefs we hold about things at the time. With hindsight I can see that some of my beliefs have been limiting, inappropriate, not helpful to winning and holding your trust.”
- “I guess it is common knowledge that my relationship with some of you (all of you) could be improved.”
- “I’m aware that some things have happened in the past that have put a strain on the relationship I have with some of you (all of you).”
- “I’m aware that over the years we’ve had some differences of opinion that have upset various people.”
- “I’ve made some poor decisions. I’ve done and said some things which have affected your trust for me. I’ve let some of you down. I acknowledge that and I apologise for those things. With the great clarity of hindsight, I wish I could change those things. I can’t explain or justify my behaviour, but I certainly wish I had not betrayed your trust.”
- “It’s no secret that there is bad blood between me and a few of you (all of you). There have been a few things that, with hindsight, I could have handled better. I also think there are a few things some of you could have handled better.”
- “We have a couple of choices. We can stay in the past and continue as we are or we can learn from our mistakes and make some changes to improve things for everybody.”
- “I’m going to try and do some new, different and better things to improve the current situation. I don’t expect to win you over overnight, but I would like you to know that I’ll be trying. How do you feel about giving it a go?”
- “I’m willing to admit I made some mistakes and to learn from them and move forward. I’d like to try over the next few weeks to change a few things about my approach. But to recover your trust and restore your confidence in me, I need your help. It has to be a two-way thing. Is that fair?”

To do this, you will require a large dose of self-awareness, humility, honesty and courage. But by doing this you will demonstrate to people that you have these qualities (even if they have been suppressed) and you will gain much respect and recover lost ground.