

## Is it naive to place your trust in people?



**Ian Lawson**

Liberating Leadership is based upon the belief that creating a climate of trust and trusting relationships is the most important thing that leaders can do in the workplace.

The logic is compelling — without trust how can you have genuine conversation? How can you talk about future possibilities with the team? How can you devolve as much accountability, revenues and ownership as possible to your team?

Yet we all know through painful experience that not everyone can be trusted. That some will work their way close to people, and then overtly or covertly betray that trust.

So how do we manage this juxtaposition as leaders? I believe there are a number of points to consider:

Stay true to the principle. Most people are trustworthy most of the time. All leadership research reinforced that this is how people want to be treated.

Believe as if you trust people, even though it is only your experience and time that can confirm your belief. People tend to live up to the expectations placed on them (either way).

Maintain a sense of prudence by occasional checking, getting written back-up or involving others for validation.

Keep your ears open to comment from trusted colleagues — very often they will perceive or hear of details that may be cause for concern before you do. Don't be blind to the evidence when it goes against what you want to hear.

Consider this: what is the alternative?