



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – June 2003

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Merge Gupta-Sunderji helps turn managers into leaders. Through engaging keynotes and facilitated workshops, she gives people specific and practical tools to achieve leadership and communication success. Contact her at www.mergespeaks.com or 403-605-4756

What you can learn from the hermit crab

In the journey of life, you will often come up against people who say hurtful or mean things. When that happens, a usual reaction is to respond in kind, and later, in the privacy of your thoughts, obsess over what the person said. When you are consumed by someone else's cruel comments, you have just allowed this person to take up residence in your head! Instead consider the lesson learned from the hermit crab.

When a hermit crab is caught by a fisherman, it snaps one claw on the fisherman's finger, and then escapes by dropping that claw from its body. The crab then scuttles away while the startled fisherman is still trying to figure out what happened. The crab can always grow a new limb, but the element of surprise is what ensures its immediate survival.

In much the same way, try dropping a claw from your body the next time someone says something hurtful or mean to you. Respond with a non-committal statement such as "I can see why you might think that way" or "Thank you for telling me that." Remember that the individual was expecting you to react negatively to the unkind comment, and when you give non-committal responses such as these, you are using the element of surprise in your favor.

Think about it. The next time someone makes a remark like "Trying to impress the boss, are you?" respond with "I can see why you might think so" and walk away. Then watch the puzzled look as he/she tries to figure out what happened!