



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – July 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

The paradox of ice cream

In our professional and personal lives, there are a myriad of situations when we don't get what we want - either the person we are dealing with, for whatever reason, doesn't give us what we want, or we get unexpected bad news. A common response is to lash out at the messenger. When questioned on this response, a close friend of mine explained it by saying "Well, I get it off my chest, and then I feel better."

This reminds me of the paradox of ice cream. Many people eat ice cream to cool them off on a hot summer day. Ironically though, ice cream is not a cooler. Oh, it may fleetingly cool your taste buds, and its psychological effect may convince you that you're cooling off! But ice cream is chock-a-block with calories, a basic unit of measurement of heat. So the ultimate effect of that frosty ice cream cone is to make you warmer, not cooler!

Much like the scenario I just described about the person who cannot (or will not) give you what you want. Giving this person a piece of your mind may make you feel better; it may fleetingly cool you off and its psychological effect may convince you that you are better off. Ultimately however, the effect of those hasty words is to heat up the situation, and ironically worsen it. The next time you are inclined to "get it off your chest", remember the paradox of ice cream, and hold back your impulsive words.