



## turning managers into leaders

### **Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – November 2003**

Welcome to **Merge's Monthly Mega-Minute** - a bite-sized, yet substantial and practical, nugget of information that you can use immediately to enhance your professional and personal success.

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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](http://www.mergespeaks.com) or 403-605-4756*

### **When you squeeze the ketchup bottle what comes out?**

Several years ago, I recall that my little niece was with me while we grilled some chicken on the barbeque one summer afternoon. She picked up the plastic bottle of ketchup and asked, "Aunty, if I squeeze this bottle, what will come out?" Matter of factly, I replied, "Ketchup". Then she picked up the bottle of mustard and asked once again, "And if I squeeze this bottle, what will come out?" "Mustard," I replied. True to form, she leaned over to pick up the bottle of relish, and just as predictably, I jumped in, "And when you squeeze the bottle of relish, out comes relish." With the innocence found only in a child, she asked, "But why Aunty?" And that point, I paused, stumped by this seemingly simple question. Sensing my hesitation, she smiled, and offered an answer of her own. "I know why, Aunty," she said. "When you squeeze the bottle, what's inside has to come out."

Human beings are like those plastic condiment bottles. When we are squeezed, what's inside comes out too. And unfortunately, we get squeezed a lot. Whether in our professional or our personal lives, we are faced with stressors on a daily basis that "squeeze" us, and for most of us, this is a reality of life, and in many cases, beyond our control. But what goes inside in the first place (and then gets squeezed out) depends on us. If we allow ourselves to fill up with negative thoughts and information, when we are squeezed, the negativity comes spewing out. But when we choose to fill up with constructive thoughts, ongoing learning, and positive information, optimism is the result.

So consciously choose what you fill up with. Turn off the radio for a while (which often gives you nothing but negative information) and instead listen to an inspirational tape. Stop watching news updates every fifteen minutes (limit yourself to just one newscast a day) and



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read a non-fiction book instead. Instead of focusing on that one big thing that went wrong today, concentrate on the many small things that went right. Remember, when you are squeezed, it is what is inside that comes out!