



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – August 2007

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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

From average to exceptional: the power of passion

July 9, 2007: 23-year old bull-rider Zeb Lanham took an unexpected flight at the Calgary Stampede. Mere seconds after he mounted his bull, he was tossed off. As he attempted to get away, the bull, seeking revenge, caught him on both horns and sent him skyward. Upward and aloft, over 25 feet, when Zeb finally reached ground level, it was only to land on his head. Despite injuries, he walked off the field, and was even heard to joke about the view from “up there.” This stalwart cowboy was back riding bulls just a few days later.

July 31, 2007: Jarred Smalley, 25-year old volunteer keeper at Big Cat Rescue in Tampa Florida, led a dozen people on a tour of the facilities. He proudly explained that the non-profit sanctuary was devoted to saving exotic cats that had been abused, abandoned, or destined for future fur coats. Jarred was far from an accomplished public speaker; yet for 90 minutes he held his audience spell-bound as he pointed to each animal by name, and described the issues they face in both captivity and the wild. Later that afternoon, his audience learned that in addition to volunteering regularly at the sanctuary, Jarred also worked at two jobs in order to make ends meet. When asked why he didn't just give up volunteering, his answer was simple, “Because here I make a difference.”

Different as these two situations may seem, there is a common factor: passion. Each of these young men was excited, enthused, perhaps even obsessed, but passionate enough to plunge in headfirst, demonstrate tenacity despite failure, and persist in the face of obstacles. And all who met these two realized one thing – that these two men *will* succeed, *because* of their passion.

Successful leadership requires the same level of passion. Obstacles and failures will always



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crop up, but it's the excitement and enthusiasm of passion that gives an average leader the courage, tenacity, and persistence to become an exceptional leader. If you are committed to being an exceptional leader, then you must have passion for your people and your mission. On the other hand, if you're not passionate about being a leader, then perhaps you should do yourself a favour and find another job.