



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – September 2009

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Merge Gupta-Sunderji turns 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 whole is greater than the sum of its parts

There is a classic Aesop's fable about a father whose sons were always fighting. In order to show them the value of working together, the father had one of the sons bring him a bundle of sticks. He gathered his sons around him, and one at a time, he asked each young man to take the bundle of sticks and try to break it. None succeeded. He then split open the bundle, and handed each son one or two sticks, asking them once again to try to break them. This time, the sons did so easily. "You see boys," he said. "Individually, these sticks do not have much strength, but when you combine their individual might, they form something of much greater power. Separately, you can be broken, but together, you are stronger."

This ageless fable carries a solid message for today's workplace. As a leader, you have people who are responsible for different tasks. There is no doubt that individually, each one of these person's roles is important, but the real power comes when you can get your people to work in synergy – to combine their individual skills and strengths to form a single cohesive unit that is greater than the sum of its individual parts. Objectively assess your team to see where there are strengths and where knowledge or skill gaps exist. Work to fill those gaps. Encourage your employees to share their experiences and insights with one other. Make it safe for your staff to acknowledge when they need help from someone else. These are the things that will help you capitalize on the power of synergy. Are you working to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts?