



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – March 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 king and his coronation robe

There was once a king who ruled an ancient kingdom for many years. It was a beautiful kingdom with sparkling streams, majestic mountains, and verdant forests. As the king's reign neared 25 years, his courtiers decided to celebrate the Silver Jubilee with great pomp and circumstance. They planned a celebration that the kingdom had never before seen - they would re-create the original coronation of the king, but this time, it would be far more magnificent and extravagant than it was 25 years ago. Plans were made - the event would take place outside in a natural valley against a spectacular backdrop of fir trees. All the king's subjects would be able to gather around the sides of the valley and look down and see the king be crowned once again. The royal tailor was assigned the task of sewing the official coronation gown. He created a masterpiece in green velvet, with ermine and rabbit fur dyed to match. For weeks before the event, there was a stir in the kingdom, and every one could feel the anticipation build.

One week before the big event, the king participated in a full dress rehearsal. At that point, a noble in the kingdom happened to point out to the king that his royal green robe was blending into the greenery of the backdrop, thus not making him as visible as a king should be. The hapless noble was immediately banished to the far reaches of the kingdom, and the king, being the king, ordered that all the fir trees in the valley should be painted red!

Wait! That sounds very foolish, doesn't it? Most of us would ask the logical question - why didn't the king just get a new robe? A gown in scarlet velvet would have been just as regal, and far easier to obtain than painting every tree!



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But hang on a minute. How many times have you noticed that you're not getting the results you want with a particular employee or co-worker, and yet you expect the employee or co-worker to change? Have you considered changing your approach first? It's a lot easier to change your robe, than have all the trees in the kingdom painted red! It's a lot easier to change your leadership approach than to expect others to conform to your style. Don't lose sight of the easier option: be flexible to changing your style of leadership if it doesn't meet the needs of that particular situation.