



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – April 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

Always take your best shot!

I'm definitely not a golf expert, but I nevertheless like to go out occasionally with friends for a short track on the front nine. The other day one of our foursome teed off with what seemed to be a handsome shot, but unfortunately it landed just this side of a fairly large water hazard. As we walked up to his ball which was still (barely) on the green, he reached into his golf bag and replaced it with another one. "What are you doing?" I asked. "Oh," he replied sheepishly. "I don't want to lose this nice new ball in the lake, so I'm swapping it with an old worn ball that I saved just for an instance like this." "What, you don't think you can make the shot?" I grinned. "I know I can't make it," came the rapid reply. "I've lost over a dozen balls this way, but the good news is that they've always been shabby ones that were falling apart. I've only lost one new ball, and that was only at first when I didn't know better," he declared proudly.

His response got me thinking about the power of expectations: by expecting to lose his ball in the lake, was my friend in fact presuming the outcome? The theory of expectations is backed up by a substantial amount of empirical research – proof positive that if you expect the worst, you will invariably get it. So by anticipating the loss of his ball, my friend was indeed contributing to his less-than-desired outcome.

Do you do that in the workplace? Do you expect less-than-stellar performance from a certain employee, or do you anticipate that an interaction with a co-worker will end poorly? If so, then according to proven data, you are guilty of creating your unwanted consequence. Instead, it would be far better for you to expect the best, take deliberate actions with your intended positive outcome in mind, and then do your utmost to achieve your hoped-for result. To put it in the words of golf: no matter what the situation, be sure to pull your finest ball out of your bag, and take the best shot you've ever taken! You won't always make a hole-in-one, but the outcome will still be better than if you expected the worst!