



# turning managers into leaders

## Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – June 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](http://www.mergespeaks.com) or 403-605-4756*

## The wonder of why

Children are perpetually curious; you have no doubt heard a child ask “Why?” Yet as adults, we tend to dramatically lessen our curiosity; in fact inquisitiveness is often frowned up. It’s occasionally referred to as “prying” or even “argumentative.” The phrase “idle curiosity” implies that such speculation and exploration is an indulgence, a pointless pastime with no real purpose. But curiosity is a compelling sentiment and a powerful skill – it is what prompts you to investigate new arenas or look for a better way to do something – it is the basis of innovation and advancement.

What if Scottish microbiologist Alexander Fleming had simply washed his petri dishes instead of wondering why bacteria failed to grow when mold blew in an open window? Would penicillin be discovered yet? What if Edwin Land’s curiosity had not been piqued by his 3-year old’s impatience to see their vacation pictures? Would instant photography exist? What if Percy Spencer had simply taken his pants to the cleaner instead of wondering why a candy bar in his pocket melted when he tested a radar system? Would you be able to microwave a frozen pizza for lunch today?

In the hustle and bustle of the day-to-day, it is far too easy to focus on the task at hand, and push aside the question of “why?” Yet, as a leader, you have a responsibility to create an environment of innovation and achievement; you have a duty to encourage curiosity and questioning. One way to accomplish that is to apply the “5Y” technique. Simply put, the “5Y” method requires you to, while solving a problem or before coming to a decision on an issue, ask the question “Why?” at least five times. Think broader, dig deeper, promote the wonder of why.