



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – June 2012

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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

Hachiya persimmons – from distasteful to delicious

If you've ever tasted a Hachiya persimmon, you've either loved it or hated it! And your sentiment would have been based on the maturity of the fruit. You see, ripe Hachiyas are soft, sweet and have a delicate flavour that is oh-so-silky-smooth. But the unripe Hachiya is the extreme opposite – unpalatably astringent – sort of like taking a bite out of an unripe bitter walnut while suddenly having your tongue and the inside of your cheeks turn furry as the moisture is drained out of every cell in the near vicinity of your mouth. The science behind this change in flavour is actually quite straightforward – the bitter and dry taste in raw Hachiya persimmons are caused by high levels of soluble tannins, but these same tannins evaporate as the fruit ripens. And one of the best ways to ripen persimmons is actually quite easy – simply expose the fruit to light, perhaps on a counter or window sill, for several days – and inedible and disgusting becomes succulent and delicious!

So whether you love or hate the Hachiya persimmon is actually all about your timing. In fact, if you think about it, that's not unlike many of the difficult communication challenges you might face in the workplace. Often, your success (or lack thereof) in persuading or influencing others over to an unappealing point of view is all about timing as well. Consider this for a moment. What if you were to put your idea or suggestion or recommendation "out there" and expose it to your various stakeholders for a few days before you pushed for them to accept it? Could the "ripening" time increase the palatability of the unpleasant decision? My experience has been that when I need to put forward recommendations that I know will not be easily accepted, it's actually a very good idea to suggest them, and then wait for a few days as people react to the negative and assimilate the positive. Frequently, the "ripening" time helps people come to terms with the pluses and the minuses of the situation, and I often have much greater success in achieving the ultimate intended outcome. What's been your experience?

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