

Landing in troubles and failures in life: A root cause analysis¹

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Today's human beings are endowed with more technology, gadgets, and knowledge that it has everything in its control. Today's technology is progressing so much that the current researchers in physics are claiming to have almost found the "God particle", which according to them is the basic raw material for everything in this universe. At this rate we will manufacture living beings in a factory (if cloning research succeeds), buy property and live in Moon or Mars (if the current trends are extrapolated into the future) and perhaps almost play "God". If we go by this description, it is almost logical to assume that compared to 100 years before, we should be on an average more satisfied and happier than our ancestors. The answer is certainly not. Unfortunately, these material developments seem to have some kind of inverse relationship to the notion of satisfaction and success in life. Terms such as "satisfaction" and "peace of mind" does not belong to the domain of science and technology. Therefore, understanding the cause and effect relationships pertaining to this is not possible from a scientific perspective.

Material growth has gone hand in hand with increasing instances of failures and dissatisfaction in life. An average citizen feels more hassled, feels dis-satisfied for a number of reasons and ends up with some troubles. Some of them even experience mental depression and seek remedy through medication or spiritual engagement. Why is this apparent conflict between material progress and mental state of affairs of the society? Modern science and technology does not have any know-how to explain why this is happening. But they do have some remedies to cope with such recurring attacks on us. Let us understand what *Gītā* has to say about this issue. Lord Krishna provides a fundamental root – cause analysis to diagnose this problem in chapter 2 of the *Gītā*.

Root Cause Analysis for failures in Life

A root cause analysis is a method in which one can logically map a cause and an effect. In simple terms we say A leads to B, B leads to C and so on. Lord Krishna has used such an approach to show how an individual gets completely destroyed using an eight stage root cause analysis.

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ 2.62

dhyāyate viṣayān-puṁsaḥ saṅgasteṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt saṁjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt-krodho'bhijāyate

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क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ 2.63

*krodhāt-bhavati saṃmohaḥ saṃmohāt-smṛtivyibhramah
smṛtibhramśāt-buddhināśo buddhināśāt-praṇśyati*

The above two ślokas has this description and the translation of these into respective cause – effect chain is as follows:

1. An Individual develops deep thoughts on certain aspects that he/she comes across
2. The deep thoughts over a period of time develops into a sense of attachment towards it (*saṅgaḥ*)
3. Successive waves of attachment transform into a cyclone of deep desire (*kāmaḥ*)
4. Deep desire increases the propensity for greater dis-appointment leading to anger (*krodhaḥ*)
5. An angry mind very soon becomes a confused and a deluded mind (*saṃmohaḥ*)
6. A deluded frame of mind soon loses the efficacy of its memory (*smṛtivyibhramah*)
7. A weakened memory invariably loses the power of discrimination (*buddhināśah*)
8. An individual losing the power of discrimination indeed perishes over time (*praṇśyati*)

Some of the above points need some more clarification. Developing deep thoughts is apparently the starting point for this trouble. Many of us do not realize this issue in life. Assume that a person owns a cycle (commensurate to his/her economic status). One day, he/she gets a ride in a luxurious Mercedes Benz car. On the day he/she had the ride, this thought of owning a Benz car entered into his/her mind. This thought was becoming stronger and stronger such that the very idea was incompatible to the existing status and means of achieving this. It is this unnatural and unrealistic thought that forms the root cause of the problem that leads us to deep failures in life.

This person would begin to lose sleep on account of this inability to acquire the Benz car and would develop a deep desire. By deep desire it means being mentally ready to “cross accepted barriers” in achieving what this person wanted. At this stage, his/her mind will be ready to get this “at any cost”. With this frame of mind, he/she will lose control of things and anger will be this person’s daily routine as it is an expression of his/her inability to reach the target that he/she set and the resulting impatience.

A person with an angry mind and a lunatic are no different. This is because in both the cases the ability to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong is already lost. Both are in an inebriated state. Once this person reaches this stage, he/she begins to take wrong decisions. This for instance includes indulging in mal-practices, fraudulent ways of doing many things, resorting to even criminal and violent activities. By hook or crook it is possible that this person finally acquired the Benz car. In medical fraternity there is a saying “the operation was successful but the patient died”. This example will also have a similar fate. What it means is by acquiring the Benz car, this person had already destroyed his/her

personality (in some cases he/she has been put behind the bars, or the family dis-owned him/her for his/her omissions and commissions etc.).

If this person simply enjoyed the Benz car ride and continued in his/her journey of hard work and progress, he/she would have had a greater chance of buying a comfortable car such as Maruti. In some cases by virtue of hard work and other supportive conditions the same person could have even acquired a similar Benz car. This could have happened as a result of a hard fought evolution over a period of time in which the thoughts and targets in life also evolved slowly over time. This is another way of getting to this point. A poor person eventually becoming the president of the country or a school boy eventually winning the Nobel Prize etc. belong to this method and not to the earlier method.

This is not a hypothetical story of an unknown person but an illustration to caution us in our life journey. Every one of us faces a similar kind of pressure and end up treading a similar path. The only difference is the degree to which we push ourselves and the effects of these actions on us. Promotion in our career, acquiring assets dis-proportionate to our limits, aiming for a standard of living that is unsustainable by normal means, obtaining power and positions in social, family and official circles, inheriting ancestral properties, obtaining better educational standards and degrees are examples where we can get trapped in the manner Lord Krishna laid out in these *ślokas*.

The key point to understand from these *ślokas* is that developing a good degree of realism on many aspects of our life is key to avoiding troubles and failures in life. On the other hand, large scale attempts in this way of doing things will make individuals very unhappy and dissatisfied and eventually leave them stressed out in life. Further, it pushes one to cross ethical and moral boundaries and keep repenting about it much later in life. Life is too beautiful to be spent in such unproductive and ugly ways. Let us discover the value of the enjoyable aspects of life and pray to Lord Krishna to endow us with a frame of mind to focus on this. The biggest plus is the ethical and moral high ground in which we can play the game of life and sleep peacefully at the end of the day.