

# BEYOND TARGETS: EMBRACING THE JOURNEY TO SUCCESS - INSIGHTS FROM THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

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*Theme of the Article: Applied Indian Philosophy*



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### Bio

Suchitra Mohanrao Joshi is the Centre Head at TargetClose, bringing over 23 years of expertise in IT to her role. With a robust background in software development and team leadership, she spearheads TargetClose India's offshore centre, driving quality and strategic initiatives.

Suchitra is also a certified Organization Development Coach and NLP Coach practitioner, empowering teams to reach their full potential while staying abreast of emerging tech trends. She takes pride in nurturing young talent, deriving joy from grooming them into future leaders. Suchitra's dedication to excellence and mentorship underscores her commitment to delivering exceptional software solutions that surpass client expectations.

### Objectives

Understand the current obsession of students and professionals with specific targets while looking into issues of how external factors influence our definition of success based on the Bhagavad Geeta. Explore how the Bhagavad Geeta can help professionals who suffer stress at work.

## Abstract

The article looks at the current obsession of students and professionals with specific targets while looking into issues of how external factors influence our definition of success. The article's insight is based on the Bhagavad Geeta which draws attention to how concentrating on results can be destructive instead of focusing on processes. The verse has four instructions: renunciation, seeing a bigger picture, giving up egoism or pride, and relinquishing the attachment towards inaction. In applying these teachings, Sankalp in goal setting is explored with emphasis on clear and intentional resolutions without attaching too much importance to outcomes. Likewise, this method followed also in academic circles emphasizes timely resource gathering while highlighting the significance of the journey and process. Moreover, beyond academics, adults as well as professionals who suffer stress at work are advised to refer to Bhagavad Geeta for answers since having things does not necessarily mean being happy.

Therefore, the article supports the adoption of a thought-out perspective that involves fixed goals and results joy when achieved. This universal concept has transformed individuals' idea of success from attainment to fulfillment toward one purposeful course completion. The message from the Bhagavad Geeta acts as a timeless guide showing that joy comes during the journey rather than from hitting fixed goals repeatedly and our goals should go beyond selfish attainments.

## Keywords

Success, Sankalp mindset, Academic goals, Stress, Detachment

## Introduction

In the fast-moving world of learning and professional life, trying to reach specific goals is often considered to be a success. This obsession with results can be stressful, leading to complete exhaustion and a limited perspective on personal development.

This article has been inspired by the Bhagavad Geeta's ageless counsel; it looks into the problems brought about by external forces that influence how success is perceived while also making an argument, for a shift in paradigm towards looking at processes rather than being locked on outcomes.

Modern Students: Fixated on Outcomes, Lost in the Journey

The majority of today's students are fixated on specific goals (Yeager & Dweck, 2020). When asked what they aspire to be, many say they want success. But when you ask them, what success means, it gets confusing. Some think it's scoring 100%. Others think it's just all about money. And that's where the problem lies: many don't know exactly what their goals are because those goals aren't coming from them, They are based on external forces and not inner beliefs.

## External forces

This generation of students has a myriad of sources from which they can gather information to influence their decision-making processes (Geurts, Reijs, &

Leenders, 2024). To take information from several directions students may consider themselves as jacks-of-all-trades.

Paradoxically, this appetite for versatility increases stress levels among them. The obsessive focus on predetermined goals such as achieving 100% overlooks the most important point which is that every action required towards achieving an objective count more than the final scores.

The question arises whether or not students pay enough attention to either the journey or the necessary steps to be taken to reach their prescribed destination. In other words: students aren't paying attention to what really matters - the journey and steps along the way (Starr, 2022). They're so worried about reaching their fixed destinations that they forget about the roads and highways needed to get there. For example, when one focuses too much on fixed targets like 100%-mark attainment it is easy to ignore how critical strategic processes are to getting there.

## **Finding Your Way to Success: Learning From The Bhagavad Geeta**

A verse from the Bhagavad Geeta offers some clarity on this point by emphasizing the importance of action over outcome fixation:

Sloka from Bhagavat Geeta Chapter 2-47

You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction (Mukundananda, 2014).

The verse of the Bhagavad Geeta provides an understanding of what this "science of work" is all about, and it offers four principles that we can use (Singhal & Singh, 2023):

### **Dedicated Action, Detached Outcome:**

This principle suggests that you should be doing your duties with utmost dedication and diligence. However, it emphasises being detached from the outcomes. So basically, focus more on the process rather than focusing on the end results (Kempton, 2021). Through this approach, one would be able to have a sense of equanimity and resilience regardless of if they're successful or not.

### **Fruits of Action (Beyond Self):**

When you think that the fruits of your labour are not just for personal enjoyment only then you would understand its broader perspective. This principle encourages individuals to look beyond themselves by recognising how their actions are interconnected with other people in their community or society (Shunmugam & Sukdaven, 2024). With this kind of mindset comes a more selfless approach to work where the goal is not just for personal gain but also contributes positively to everyone's well-being.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर् मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७ ॥

*karmany evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana  
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmani*

**You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.**

Figure 1 (Arya, 2023)

Relinquishing the Ego Of Sole Authorship:

There's no I in teamwork and there's no room for pride when you anchor yourself as the sole doer too! This principle makes us realise how collaborative and interconnected our work is with others'. With humility and teamwork as its foundation, one will acknowledge that achievements are made possible by collective efforts (Dhamija, Dhamija, Pandoi, & Singh, 2023). Applying this perspective greatly helps in fostering inclusiveness and cooperation within the work environment.

## Action Over Inaction:

It's best not to get too attached in idleness especially if it leads to procrastination because it won't do any good! Being stagnant doesn't help anyone move forward so we must find a balance between thoughtful contemplation and decisive action (Duffy, 2019). Progress is achieved through engagement - keep moving!

Applications in Goal Setting  
Taking Mathematics for example wherein a perfect score is a goal, you should be

setting actionable daily targets and engaging with the process of improvement rather than only focusing on the end goal. This practice aligns with "Kaizen" - this is an approach for continuous, incremental improvement (Janjić, Bogicevic, & Krstić, 2019).

Emphasis on The Journey:

The key message is to shift focus from an outcome-oriented mindset to valuing the journey and process of action (Dhillon, 2023). Remember that success isn't solely defined by what you achieve at the end but it's also rooted in your efforts,

learning, and growth throughout.

In essence, these principles encourage a mindful and balanced approach to work by recognising how each individual's actions are interconnected with a larger purpose. It then prompts a shift in focus from outcomes to valuing the journey of

## Methodology

Aligning Goals with Action:  
Learning from Sankalp

Sankalp is a Vedic ritual practice that gives us some key insights into the world of effective goal setting. It involves holding water, making a clear and intentional resolution (or Sankalp), and releasing the water as a symbol for shifting focus to the process rather than the desired outcome (YAIIO, 2023).

Clear and Intentional Goal-Setting

It's encouraged that students set clear and intentional academic goals, similar to how one would make a Sankalp in Vedic rituals. This means thoughtfully resolving what it is they aim to achieve before proceeding any further (Gitadaily, 2016).

This could be anything from target grades to mastering specific skills.

## Detachment from the result:

After having set their goals, students are advised against becoming too attached to them or fixating on them. This idea stems from releasing the water in the Vedic ritual which represents freeing oneself of attachment towards an end result (Kalra, et al., 2018). By doing so, students can maintain equanimity and focus primarily on putting in effort rather than obsessing over grades or achievements.

## Focus on the Journey and Process

Focusing on the journey and process echoes just what Sankalp is all about. Instead of being excessively preoccupied with finishing as soon as possible, students should direct their attention toward each step involved in achieving their objectives

(Wadekar, 2024). For example, instead of fretting about taking a math exam, it's best if they focus on proper problem-solving, understanding concepts fully, and continuously getting better at these things.

When setting academic goals—whether it's achieving perfection or anything else students can embody this principle by:

## Centering attention on action and intricacies:

Actively solving diverse math problems instead of passively going through them hoping for good results, dedicating effort to mastering various types of problems and formulas, and then reflecting on all this practice and finding areas that need improvement (Roy, 2024). By aligning actions with the initial resolution, students ensure success becomes a natural outcome of the process.

## Individualised Notions of Success

It's important to understand that one person's idea of success may not be what another person has in mind. Every student will have their own journey in life, and so should their definitions of success. Instead of comparing oneself to others or setting themselves up for feelings of inadequacy, it's healthier if they aim to experience personal growth and improvement (Ramani, 2024). This will ultimately lead them towards a happier and more fulfilling academic experience.

## **Continuous Pursuit of Personal Growth:**

Shifting focus away from arbitrary goals and instead towards continuous self-improvement is key here. Education is an endless journey, so why would we ever see success as a static finish line? It must be acknowledged that you can never "finish" learning something—they'll always be able to find room for growth in any area they want to look at (Mukherjee, 2017). So, by persistently striving to get

better at something (anything really), they're simply setting themselves up for more opportunities for success.

## **2.0 The Timeless Wisdom of the Bhagavad Geeta: Beyond Academics**

It's all too easy to look past the wisdom in the Bhagavad Geeta, far beyond what it has to say about studying. The advice here will ring true whatever your age or line of work though.

If you're struggling with finding that perfect work-life balance, then Sloka 47 is a good place to start thinking. It tells us that we should fulfill our duties without pinning ourselves too much on the outcome - which feels particularly poignant in today's world where a successful career often translates into financial success, and also a near-impossible hunt for happiness and well-being. It's an unfortunate but real thing that many adults believe they need a certain level of wealth to be happy. They want a fancy car or a

perfect lifestyle because they think these material things will bring them contentment. But this isn't how it works - as we are told by the Bhagavad Geeta itself. Happiness and well-being aren't something you can buy from outside sources; they're states of mind, not possessions. Likewise, when people decide to pursue their financial goals, that path usually starts with deciding on an income goal that they absolutely must reach if they want any hope of being happy. Again though, the Bhagavad Geeta pushes against this idea. In its place is one called Sankalp - which tells us we should set clear financial goals while acknowledging that getting there (the journey) might be more important than actually arriving at your destination. Ultimately, what you should be striving for is joy in everyday life - in what you do and accomplish day-to-day, no matter how small those things may be. If only every one of us could find fulfillment in just ticking our completed tasks off our lists! The Bhagavad Geeta tells us very clearly though that we should. Not just in our daily lives, but when we think about reaching targets too -

it emphasises the importance of finding happiness in the journey as much as in the goal itself (Datta, 2021).

The beauty of this approach is that anyone can use it. It's a way to transform how you see and work towards success, no matter what kind you're after. Whether you're trying to climb your career ladder or figure out what will make you happy, the Bhagavad Geeta's teachings have got you covered. Approach everything with a Sankalp mindset — where accomplishment comes from the process of working, not just the end goal — and that process becomes something rewarding and fulfilling all on its own.

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## Results and Discussion

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### 3.1 Case Study 1

I would like to share a family story that highlights a significant improvement in my cousin's son's academic performance. Initially, despite his teachers praising his understanding of subjects and articulate explanations in class, there

seemed to be a disconnect between his knowledge and exam scores. One day, his teacher pointed out this inconsistency, and he voiced his frustration, expressing that he was merely aiming to pass exams rather than excel.

In response, I advised him to adopt a step-by-step approach, beginning with the goal of eliminating any red marks on his exam papers. I stressed that the only red marks should be the tick marks and those given for correct answers. Following this advice, he started producing flawless responses. Before each exam, I would predict his potential score, initially leading him to believe I had some mystical ability. However, he soon realized it was based on my careful analysis.

Seeking my predictions became a pre-exam ritual for him. On one occasion, well-prepared and curious about achieving a perfect score of 100, he asked for my input. I informed him that he could expect around 92-93. Intrigued, he sought guidance on reaching a full score, and I provided specific suggestions. Implementing these suggestions, he achieved an impressive 96%.

This experience motivated him to seek advice earlier in the preparation process, resulting in consistent scores ranging from 96-98%. Remarkably, he transitioned from being result-oriented to action-oriented, and success continued to follow. His Sankalp (intention) was to get good marks, he made that Sankalp and moved towards his action improving his study pattern and writing patterns. He not only scored high to reach his goal but also made his parents happy, which brought him even greater joy.

### 3.2 Case Study 2

Driven by a dual ambition to achieve financial security and serve his community, this middle-class man, who initially sold milk and took on other jobs, embarked on a unique path. He aspired to a life of comfort and luxury for himself and his family but also envisioned a way to contribute to society.

Through self-reflection, he discovered his entrepreneurial potential and decided to venture into the construction industry. His initial goal was to build affordable housing, starting with just 100 units. As his

business flourished, he progressively scaled his ambitions, eventually providing shelter for 500, and now aiming to reach 1,000 individuals.

While financial gain undoubtedly followed his success, it wasn't his primary motivator. His unwavering focus remained firmly fixed on the act of building shelters and alleviating the housing needs of society. He continuously expanded his impact, demonstrating that true fulfilment can stem from not only achieving financial goals but also from making a positive social contribution.

His Sankalp (intention) was not just to make money, it was beyond selfishness to serve society. He made that Sankalp and moved towards his action of building shelters for others.

### 3.3 Case Study 3

Sahana<name changed> slumped down into the chair. She looked like she was carrying a heavy weight on her shoulders. Tears were streaming from her eyes as she admitted, "I've tried everything, notes and timers and rewards, nothing works. I just push it off." Her parents

sat next to her, their faces full of concern. Procrastination had become more than an inconvenience in their house - it was ruining Sahana's academic future.

But I wasn't going to attack procrastination head-on. Instead, we'd set a powerful intention - or Sankalp. I applied some NLP techniques. When we talked about what Sahana really wanted, we concluded that she wanted good grades, the light came back into her face and that became her Sankalp.

I made her realize that to accomplish her Sankalp she needs to submit her assignments on time. Then we broke the mountain of tasks down into crumb-sized bites. Rather than saying "study more" - which is too vague for anyone to act upon for very long - we made specific targets: one chapter a day or enough problems to fill five pages every day. Every target crossed off gave Sahana a little success high that filled up space inside her chest and pushed out her fears with every breath she took. I explained that consistency was key - so long as you meet these little targets consistently you'll unlock long-term success.

Slowly Sahana changed course. One small win at a time she picked at the mountain until it started to crumble beneath her feet. And when it did - oh boy did things start getting easier! With each assignment turned in on time, Sahana's fear melted away like snowflakes falling into boiling water. It wasn't something I could have put into words before now but there's just something about finishing only one thing... Just one thing... Everyday. That quenches my anxieties better than any water bottle ever could have. Let alone how much it helps us uncover our true potential by not caring about anything else except getting that ONE thing done today.

And the change wasn't sudden, it was just a steady trickle towards greatness. Sahana went from drowning in procrastination to setting a clear path toward academic success - and she did it all without even being aware of what she was doing. It didn't take long for studying to stop being a chore and start being fuel for her Sankalp. Something that up until now had been nothing more than a dream in her mind's eye. He not only scored high to reach his



goal but also brought joy to his parents, which made him even happier. I've never seen anyone go from so far behind in schoolwork to so far ahead so fast! And all by accident too! But I guess this just goes to show that with the right Sankalp and enough little actions done consistently over time can make all the difference in the world!

### 3.4 Case Study 4

Sumitra<name changed> stared at the untouched canvas. It just sat there, a hollow box with nothing inside, chuckling in her face. Inspiration used to be like gasoline, except now it only flickered like a birthday candle. Why did she feel empty and just plain awful? She used to love the feeling of painting but years of seeking awards and gallery shows made her question why she even bothered.

So, I came to help her find that magic again. We dove into the idea of what we call Sankalp – holding a powerful intention that'll guide you throughout your journey. Together we unspooled Sumitra's desires for creating art. It wasn't about getting any more awards or being

shown on TV somewhere. It was just the mere joy of creation that held true for her. This became her Sankalp in this dark time. With our newfound clarity, Sumitra shifted priorities heavily. Now instead of setting goals for accolades, she started by aiming to do something small every day: test out a new technique; use a different colour palette; or maybe even allow herself to mess around on the canvas without any plan at all! Each action fuelled by her Sankalp was another step forward towards reigniting her creativity.

Competitive distractions began to lose their grip too as this new mindset took hold within Sumitra's mind. Social media comparisons and trendy style emulation started losing panache among them now too. The studio once seen as an enemy stronghold suddenly transformed into a place waiting for exploration! That blank canvas no longer brought anxiety but excitement instead – where else could they show their emotions on?

Slowly but surely, it worked wonders within Sumitra's mind! Her purpose returned when she started

experimenting again- the expectation was way too heavy anyway! Then after some time, paintings stopped trying so hard to impress critics and instead began showing raw honesty and free spirit. A sense of fulfillment then bloomed within Sumitra, which proved a Sankalp's worth!

One day a local gallery owner saw the energy within Sumitra's work and immediately offered her a solo exhibition. It wasn't the validation she once craved but it was definitely a natural consequence of pursuing her Sankalp. Her artwork mirrored her personal journey and that resonated with viewers seeking authenticity.

Sumitra's journey became proof of how important intentions are. By prioritizing pleasure over external rewards, she found inspiration to continue making art and created work that even connected strongly with others. She not only achieved success in her personal goal of showcasing her painting in the gallery but also provided support to her family. All thanks to one simple Sankalp and the action that accompanied it!

## Conclusion

In conclusion, these case studies show us how strong intentions can transform your entire life and that our goals should go beyond selfish attainments. In the first story, a student made a conscious choice to stop focusing on the result. Instead, they used a step-by-step method and in doing so saw their academic performance skyrocket. This principle of shifting from results to action-oriented thinking plays a key role in this transformation.

And it's not only about results or money either. The second case study follows a man who was determined to achieve success and give back at the same time. His focus was never on making money alone but rather on using his wealth to build shelters for others. This fulfilment he finds is derived from having actions that align with meaningful Sankalp.

The third case is particularly interesting because we've all been there at some point... procrastination. By helping Sahana express what she

truly wanted – good grades – and breaking tasks down into manageable chunks; an amazing progression began to take place. If you consistently take small actions then eventually you'll see a profound change.

Lastly, we follow Sumitra as she transforms her art in the fourth case study. She decided that her Sankalp no longer consisted of seeking external validation but instead expressing raw honesty and free spirit in her work. As you'll see through her art, this decision would spark something within her that brought out the best work of her career.

At its core these stories all share one thing: setting clear intentions and consistently taking action towards those goals is essential for anyone serious about achieving great things in life; be it school, business, or personal hobbies like art!

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