

Tackling Emotional upsets effectively : The Bhagvad Gita's way



Managers may learn certain emotional competencies to tackle emotional upsets by emulating the sermons from the Bhagvad Gita. The emotional upheavals in personal and professional life affect productivity, effectiveness and self image. The life of the Pandavas in exile is a perfect example of tackling emotional upsets in life. As the story goes, losers in the deceitful act of gambling and humiliated by the Kauravas, the Pandavas started for their exile in forest. Krishna reached Kamyak forest where the Pandavas and Draupadi were staying. He advised the Pandavas to be patient and not lose heart. He said the ordeal they had to face was for their good as **'Experience is the only source of effective Learning'**. Good and bad experiences are essential to get a correct perspective and fulfillment of life. Suffering and sorrows bring the requisite feeling of renunciation that is essential to seek higher goals in life.

Another emotional competency we learn from the Bhagvad Gita is ***to face the stresses in life***. *The cause of stress is the build up of emotions and the perceived inability to meet the existing challenges or problems satisfactorily.* This happens when the emotions are not released or resolved. Even though it is the same world for everyone, perceptions differ as do the responses. The important causes of stress as enumerated in the Bhagvad Gita are keeping goals without taking into consideration one's capacity and inclinations. Without the 'fruit', life would not be worth living, imagining ourselves to be the only one responsible to attain our goals, entertaining values and lifestyles that do not help us relax, having self-centred, calculative and loveless relationships and faulty perceptions about ourselves, about life and the world at large.

How to counter the causes of stress. The Bhagvad Gita says that you are never alone. 'Look at the cosmos, the world, the seasons, your body, everything is working so beautifully. There is a great intelligence operating in and through everything. One should learn the art of

performing actions while holding the hands of this power called God. Everyone in the world seeks pleasure, but it is strange to see that the majority has never cared to go into this secret of life. Happiness is never in any object, achievement or person in life. It is the subjective essence of all. It is extremely important **to open the inner gates of joy, thereafter there will be a subjective revolution in life.** Further, we learn from the Bhagvad Gita that *the essence of one is the essence of all. Atma is Paramatma.* Know that and be free from all sense of limitations. The experience of knowing one's self is the experience beyond description. It is verily total contentment. The cancer of selfishness and egocentric existence is rooted out completely thereafter. Any person who sees the above facts of life, and also assimilates this knowledge, shall certainly root out the very cause of stress. Any other methodology is a compromise; it is only a temporary cure, or a first aid. The thrust in most of the stress workshops is only in facilitating the release of 'pent-up-emotions' and not to provide any plan of action to guarantee that the emotions will not be repressed in the first place. The Bhagvad Gita provides a holistic approach in this regard. Before facing the situation, charge your mind with positive thoughts and emotions, know your stress symptoms and stressors. *Learn the ways to emotional release and intense living; learn to 'let go' and relax; cultivate positive qualities such as not getting swept away by the surge of an emotion, not losing your cool because of someone else's fault, or see all egocentric actions to be the cause of all negativities etc.*

Yet another emotional competency to learn is **Self - Realisation**. It further means emotional maturity, which constitutes evaluating one's emotions, identifying and expressing feelings and balancing the states of heart and mind. This is a state where an individual recognises his inner self and responds accordingly. As stated in the Bhagvad Gita, **Meditation is the tool to achieve self - realisation.** In a secluded place, establish a posture with a straight back. Concentrate between the eyebrows or on the tip of the nose. Fix the mind on the self (atman). *Develop one pointed concentration called dhyana and achieve self-realisation (or Union with God) in the state called samadhi.* Observing moderation in everything, with strict celibacy, one overcomes the lower self in order to gain the higher self. Thus, the yogi no longer relishes the pleasures of the senses. He cannot be deluded any more. He abides in the self. Needless to say that many modern organisations and individuals are practicing meditation to tackle emotional upsets such as frustrations, conflicts, inferiority complexes, stress and burnout.

Another emotional competency that the Bhagvad Gita teaches you is **How to Express Yourself**. It may be understood that there are many moments in our lives when we knowingly suppress many of our emotions. This becomes the cause for many emotional

upsets. The psychologists explain that repressed emotions accumulate a tremendous amount of dynamic energy which must necessarily seek a field of expression. If the expression of repressed emotions is not permitted, it can boomerang back to destroy the very individual. As we may see in the Mahabharata, Arjuna came under the influence of his repressed conditions on the battlefield and behaved as a victim of perfect neurosis. The causes of his emotional repressions are not far to seek. A great hero, confident of his own strengths, was made to live amidst the unjust tyranny of his Machiavellian cousins. At the same time, he could not give vent to his nature because of the righteous policy of peace of his elder brother, Yudhishthira. Moreover, during the last year of their exile when they had to live incognito, the Pandavas had to serve as menials in the palace of King Virata. The carping injustice and the cruel indignities caused a lot of repression in Arjuna's mind. For expression of these repressed emotions, he found a healthy way in the severe tapas which he performed during his life in the jungles. It now transpires that an individual needs a channel to express himself or herself for a healthy and stress-free life. But how to do it is the question.

If Managers decide to follow these philosophies it may provide them **Eternal Peace and Happiness**. There are innumerable strategies illuminated in the Bhagvad Gita to cope with unpleasant situations. *For example*, the Bhagvad Gita tells you that your behaviour should never be such that you **don't expect others to behave like you do**. *Revenge is not always better, but neither is forgiveness; learn to know them both, so that there is harmony.* Be aware that after joy follows sorrow and sorrow is followed by joy like a cycle of day and night. They ceaselessly rotate on the wheel of life. This is relevant from the point of view of the modern concept of Management such as **Adaptability and Flexibility**— an important sign of emotional maturity. These tell you to behave differently in different situations. If you have to get angry, do it; the only thing to keep in mind is that the anger should be appropriate to the situation — neither more nor less. In addition, the Bhagvad Gita tells you that friendship is an important emotional relationship, which has to be followed in letter and spirit; similarly, enmity is also an emotional relationship that needs to be followed to its logical conclusion. We are told to be emotionally competent and fight our way out.

There are numerous other teachings that the Bhagvad Gita has given which ranges from being **Emotionally Mature to being Emotionally Sensitive**. The teachings go a long way in helping us understand how to tackle emotional upsets in life. The modern world can benefit by putting them in practice. For example, according to the Bhagvad Gita, lying is to deception what adultery is to lust. Being honest about our dishonesty is a lot harder than just not telling lies; but it will bring freedom and wholeness when we learn how to do it. Anger

and lies may make people mad; but genuine love and truth can be far more convincing, and could lead to fiercer persecution. **If only we would confess Our Sins, Our Fears, Our Disagreements, Our Delusions, Our Weaknesses, etc., we could be 'cleansed from all unrighteousness'**. Such a situation may be described as being emotionally intelligent in modern times. The social conscience forces us to hide the truth about the many games we play with opponents in an effort to score points against them. It may be wise to keep some things (like suspicions) secret for a while, but it is important to be clear with yourself and with God about what is really happening. Clinging to a unique self-image can blind people to the benefits of identifying with others who preach the truth. Fear and pride hold us back from spiritual growth. Make the impossible possible, make room for us where there is no room, bring back life to us for we are as good as dead. The mind is very restless, forceful and strong; *it is more difficult to control the mind than to control the wind*. But if we can master the art of doing the same, we will have all the joys in life and handle emotional upsets. This is the real mantra of the Bhagvad Gita for modern-day managers.

Conclusion

While summarising the lessons learnt, we may say that a manager would know **to inculcate the Emotional Competency of Righteousness Actions from the Bhagvad Gita**. The popularity of the Bhagvad Gita is based on the fact that it managed to show that there are different pathways to God and all of them are equally valid.

God can be reached through different ways. Here 'reaching God' has to be interpreted in a wider perspective by the managers. It may include craving for a satisfying personal life or having an effective outcome at the workplace or perhaps both. Any path that provides inner strength or satisfaction to a manager to help him achieve his / her goals is the path of action. It may be seen that the Bhagvad Gita stresses **the paths of knowledge, action, devotion and meditation** while discouraging the path of emotions. This may not be interpreted as 'emotions' being given low priority or being ignored in the Bhagvad Gita. The correct interpretation would be that emotions are at times so forceful and blind that they take over human cognition and non - cognition. The effect in such circumstances is disastrous. Hence, the Bhagvad Gita tells a manager to regulate emotions in an appropriate way and measure. This may be referred to as emotional sensitivity which helps a person to maintain harmony, rapport, and comfort with others. Finally, a Manager can choose the pathway or any combination of pathways to suit his / her own abilities .A deep insight into the tenets of the holy Bhagvad Gita can help you inculcate in your personality the traits of a great manager and chief executive like Arjuna or greatest teacher and patron like Krishna or an effective

leader like Yudhisthira. There are other characters, as we have seen, who in their own right, exhibit traits that reflect diverse emotions that are thought to be appropriate even in modern times. This is why this great epic is considered relevant and appropriate even today all over the world. We have to learn to spread the bright light of the Bhagvad Gita throughout the world to achieve definite excellence and move towards a **stress-free and a Dynamic Managerial Environment**, which could be applied both in our day-to-day activities and in the competitive corporate environment