

The Krishna Way

K- Karma

R- Redemption

I – I (Ego)

S – Self Confidence

H - Humility

N - Now

A - Altruism

We have all gone through situations at one time or another where we question what the right thing to do would be? Have you heard Christians say “What Would Jesus Do?” Similarly, when we have decisions to make in our lives, we must think “What Would Krishna Do? This is called “The Krishna Way.” The Krishna Way, as described here is a framework or a moral compass for life, showing us how it should be lived according to *Bhagvad Gita*. *Bhagvad Gita* is an ancient Hindu scripture narrating the counsel Lord Krishna gave his disciple Arjun when he was facing critical decision in his life.

Lord Krishna’s life was an example of how a human being can live a life full of joy, pleasure and peace while still fighting internal and external wars with evil. He showed us how to be playful in life, enjoying life on a daily basis while continuing to do the right things. His life was a true example of how one can live happily in this world by doing the right things and live and path of karma yoga. Lord Krishna lays out a detailed approach for us to live an ideal life.

We can use acronym KRISHNA to help us understand this process:

K is for Karma. Karma is the basis of the *Bhagvad Gita* sacred text. Lord Krishna tells us that we cannot sit still while living our lives. We have to do our duties and act continuously, which is the definition of karma. We cannot remain actionless, even for a second. Humans by nature are driven to act. Lord Krishna in the *Gita* encourages us to do our obligatory duties as effectively and efficiently as possible but to also do it without expecting anything in return. Continue to perform your duties without any desire for results, because by doing such karma, you will achieve moksha (Nirvana).

Karma yoga sounds great in theory, but how do we get there? It is a wonderful concept that is actually not that complicated. Lord Krishna says that any karma performed for personal pleasure, profit, power or ego satisfaction is defined as prisoner action. Basically, if your karmas satisfy only your own desire to become rich, powerful or to satisfy your ego, then you are bound by your karmic desires.

Karma in simple terms is “what goes around comes around.” If all your karmas are performed towards yourself, then you are not “depositing” anything for your future. Your previous karmas will be depleted at some point and if you are not accumulating any karmas for future, you will be left without anything to withdraw from. This is similar to author Stephen Covey’s concept of the “emotional bank account,” as it relates to his traits of a highly effective person. The concept is simply doing things for others without expecting anything in return upfront – the equivalent of depositing your good karma in the bank. In the future when you are in a need, you can withdraw this deposit of good

karma from the bank. The key here is to understand that you are depositing without any expectations of reward. In the end, you will get the good karma back but not necessarily from the recipient of your initial good deed but from someone else. So karma is doing the right things for the right reasons. Continue to do your duties for the right reasons and not for selfish gain.

You have the right to do your duties but do not have the right to the fruit of your performed work. You should never be without action and your motive should not include the fruits of your work.

[Bhagavad Gita 2:47](#)

R is redemption. Redemption, according to Webster's Dictionary, is defined as "release from sin." We all make mistakes in life and even if we try to live ideally, we still would make mistakes – intentional and unintentional. Even if we make an unintentional mistake, it becomes our karma and we suffer the consequences. So, redemption is essential. How do we make up for our wrong karmas? How do we release our sin? Recognizing that we have done wrong is a key part of moving towards doing right. Once we have recognized that we have done something wrong, we need to figure out how we are going to correct it. So redemption is a three-step process 1) Recognizing that we have done wrong. 2) Figuring out how to correct the wrong. 3) Correcting the wrongdoing. Although, it may sound easy, it is a very difficult process. Our ego gets in the way of correcting our mistakes. We have to conquer our ego to redeem our wrongdoings. Which leads to "I" our ego.

I stands for "I come first." The human ego causes many problems in our lives. In the Western World there is a tendency to be individualistic. In Hinduism we are taught to live for ourselves as well as for others. If we live only for ourselves, then we are selfish human beings. We live in this universe with others, not just humans, but also animals and plants. There is no way we can survive alone in the universe. So then why are we so busy trying to satisfy our ego?

If we only learn to be self-confident while thinking of others, we have a winning combination. In Covey's book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, he writes about the habits of successful people. One of the habits is the "Win-Win." Although, he focuses on the business situation, it goes for our personal lives as well. Thinking win-win is key in being a successful person in any country or any society. Ego has no place in spiritual life. It is the biggest roadblock in a human being's success. Therefore, we need to manage our ego, yet remain self-confident.

Self-important, obstinate, swept away by the pride of wealth, they ostentatiously perform sacrifices without any regard for their purpose. Egotistical, violent, arrogant, lustful, angry, envious of everyone, they abuse my presence within their own bodies and in the bodies of others.

[-Bhagavad Gita 16:13-18](#)
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Self-Confidence is another key trait to our success in life. As we discussed above, we need to manage our ego but remain confident. This can get tricky at times. The question remains how do we know when we are self-confident and not egoistic and when we not egoistic and but lack self-confidence? Lord Krishna says that we need to be self-confident always but be free of ego. Let's use examples to illustrate this. Are you doing karma to make yourself feel better? Or are you doing karma for the right reason, such as helping others or making a clean living? The former could represent one's quest for material objects, while the latter represents the true meaning of karma.

However, if we are fortunate enough to have prosperity in life then Lord Krishna says to enjoy it and use your resources to help others. Sometimes we misunderstand and think that if we enjoy our life then we are doing something wrong. Not so, according to Lord Krishna. If you help others, there is nothing wrong with enjoying the prosperity you have earned through your karmas. King Janaka, Sita's father, lived the prosperous life of a king; yet he is known as the greatest yogi ever. This is where self-confidence comes into picture. If you do the right things, are comfortable with yourself and confident in yourself, then you will not feel guilty about enjoying life. Again, doing the right things in life will keep you from feeling guilty in life. This guilt is what keeps us from progressing. Self-confidence will lead you to live a guilt-free life and become spiritually successful.

Humility by definition is absence of pride or ego but still being self-confident. Once we have identified egoistic behavior and self-confidence, we must remember to be humble. Humility is a trait that we have to practice on a regular basis. Money and power can very easily get to our head and we need to watch that very carefully. Being humble is very important in our spiritual growth. Lord Krishna showed us various ways of being humble. One example was when his childhood friend Shudama, who was very poor, came to Krishna's palace. Lord Krishna got up from his throne, sat with him, hugged him and ate the poha that Sudhama brought. Krishna at that point did not care whether he was rich or poor. Krishna also did not let the history get in the way of their friendship. When Sudhama and Krishna were young, they went to take care of the cowherds one day. During the day Krishna fell asleep while they were resting and Sudhama ate poha alone without any regard for Krishna. When Krishna asked Sudhama if he was eating anything, Sudhama lied and said that his teeth were just chattering because he was cold. Later in life Sudhama lost everything and became very poor. This was due to his own Karma, yet Krishna still treated him as his dear friend.

The story above tells us two things: 1) Our karmas do come back to us: good or bad. 2) The humility Lord Krishna demonstrated teaches us that we need to be humble, no matter the situation.

N is for Now. We only need to live in the now, not the past or the future - neither of which we can control. We do, however, have control over the present time and this is what we must focus on. Our minds run a lot faster than rest of our bodies. For example if we are talking to someone, we could be either judging them or thinking ahead of what they are saying. Most of us do not even pay full attention to the person we are talking to!

Living in the now is what Krishna professes and is how he lived his life. There are two major benefits to living in the present: 1) You will be able to forgive everyone if you

can move on from the past. This will help your mental and emotional health, making you a stronger person. If we keep grudges and anger towards others, we actually hurt ourselves in the process. By forgiving others we free ourselves from all the negative emotions inside us and thus raise our consciousness and move towards enlightenment. 2) You can live your life more peacefully by not worrying about the future all the time. Most of us drive ourselves crazy by worrying about what will happen the next moment, next week or next month. Anxiety comes from worrying about the future. So, by living in the present we can rid ourselves of anxiety problems as well. Lord Krishna in *Gita* talks about how we need to only focus on our karmas and not on their results. So, if we live in the present we are actually following the *Bhagvad Gita* by forgiving everyone and doing our karmas, without any expectation for its results.

A is for Altruism. Altruism is the key to living “The Krishna Way.” The *Bhagvad Gita* teaches us to give to others because they need it and because it is the right thing to do. Altruistic behavior is doing things for others, whether it is financial, physical or emotional, without expecting anything in return from that person. Giving to others not only strengthens your body, mind and spirit but it also puts your good karmas in your “account.” Studies show that giving without return expectations is as beneficial to the giver as it is to the recipient.

Each of the concepts I have detailed above is tightly intertwined and dependent on each other. Ultimately, “The Krishna Way” boils down to one concept: doing the right thing. And while life is full of difficult decisions and situations that may not be so cut and dry, you can find your answers by asking the same question time and again: “What Would KRISHNA Do?”

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