

5 Spiritual Secrets to Succeed at Everything You Do

AN INTRODUCTION TO KARMA YOGA

What if I told you that you could be successful with every action you do?

Seems impossible, doesn't it?

But when you look at action through the lens of Karma yoga it becomes a possibility.

Karma yoga is the spiritual path of action.

Karma yoga teaches you how to use the human body you've been given successfully, so that you can live happily and attain spiritual awakening.

Everyday you are faced with the task of acting in the world.

The way you act is either a source of freedom and delight, or bondage and suffering.

Action in the world is the most fundamental part of spiritual practice, and living a good, successful life.

Most people who are familiar with Karma yoga think it's just about doing good deeds.

But Karma yoga is so much more than that.

It's an entire method for acting skillfully in the world.

I want to share with you five of the best kept “secrets” of success found in Karma yoga.

These secrets have nothing to do with the Law of Attraction or “manifesting”. They are open secrets, yet mostly neglected in modern culture.

I've distilled these 'secrets' from scriptures and the works of sages and saints, so that you don't have to.

There is a lot of amazing content here, so I've split them up into two parts to digest more easily. This email is the first part.

What I'm sharing with you are time-tested, powerful methods to achieve truly meaningful success in your life.

And who doesn't want that?

Here's an overview of the 5 secrets you'll learn about:

1. The True Meaning of Success
2. Anatomy of Successful Action
3. Get Into Flow by Letting Go
4. The Wisdom of Letting Go
5. Your Duties and You

Many of these secrets I'm sharing with you come from the epic poem the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In the poem, Arjuna, a brave warrior, is on the brink of battle against his clansman, yet finds himself distraught at the prospect of having to fight and kill his evil relatives.

His charioteer, Krishna, a divine avatar, wisely counsels Arjuna on how to approach the epic battle before him, and in doing so explains the philosophy and practice of Yoga.

The battle depicted in the *Bhagavad Gita* is metaphorical for life. This battle between good and evil wages daily within you.

Every day you are faced with decisions that align you on either the side of good and right action, or ignorant and ego driven action.

You know these moments well, and often you may find yourself ill equipped to handle them. Not anymore.

Karma yoga is the science of perfecting your actions to win this battle.

By becoming aware of the principles Karma Yoga shares you have new tools at your disposal to help you act for your highest good.

So, read on, and find out how you can attain the success you desire!

1. The True Meaning of Success

Take a quick moment and ask yourself, what does success mean to you?

The common definition of success in the modern world goes something like this:

Actions that bring about my desired result are successful.

But if this were true, then why are "successful" people so often unhappy?

Why are we still unhappy even when we get what we want, or are deemed successful by society?

Many celebrities, politicians, and musicians have had their wildest dreams come true, yet they are still unhappy.

And how can we be considered truly successful if we're unhappy?

Successful people are often some of the most miserable.

The famous actor and comedian Jim Carrey has a great quote on this:

“

I wish everyone could experience being rich and famous, so they'd see it wasn't the answer to anything.”

This quote highlights perfectly how the modern definition of success isn't meaningful.

We need to redefine what success is in our lives, otherwise we risk falling into an unending abyss of desire and disappointment – no matter how ‘successful’ we appear to be in the world.

So, what does ‘success’ mean in the truly meaningful sense?

Fortunately, sages, saints and stoics have contemplated what successful action is for centuries.

The general consensus on successful action is this:

Successful actions are those done in service without attachment to a result.

The most fundamental reason why this approach to action is successful, is because actions done in this way prevent attachment.

When we act without attachment, our actions are free of the expectations that cause us suffering, and we remain in a balanced state of mind whether we succeed or "fail".

So, what causes us to get so attached to our actions?

The main cause of attachment is our ego.

The ego is our individual sense of self. The ego isn't ‘bad’ per-se. In fact, the ego is a brilliant creation—the pinnacle of billions of years of evolution.

Problems arise when we attach our identity to the ego and its tendencies, and forget our deeper nature as divine consciousness.

Your identity as Spirit and divine consciousness transcends the body and mind, and interconnects you with all living things.

When we act exclusively for ourselves we act unnaturally, and against our true nature.

The ego is your tool to interface with your body and the world. It's like a super powerful AI with a mind of its own.

But it isn't "you".

This misidentification with the ego is the root of suffering in life.

When you act with a desired result fixed in your mind, you create attachment to how your ego wants things to be.

And, of course, when things inevitably don't go your way you're disappointed and suffer.

This cycle of acting with attachment happens endlessly and is self-defeating.

The goal of yoga (and all spiritual practices) is to weaken the ego, purify the mind, and reveal the divine nature of your consciousness.

By acting selflessly and without expectation, you are acting in accordance with your true nature as pure consciousness, as Spirit.

From this place of spiritual knowledge, you realize serving others, is really serving yourself.

You act in a spiritually awakened way.

Then, all of your actions are successful in the most meaningful sense of the word.

Even if your actions "fail" in the eyes of others you're still successful, since you acted in the best interest of all, and let go of attachment to a result.

Acting in this awakened way, you can achieve success with every action you do.

Summary: Karma yoga states that actions done in service to others without expectation of a result are successful, because they serve the greater good, weaken attachment to your ego, and affirm your divine nature.

2. Anatomy of Successful Action

The Sanskrit word karma means action.

Karma is the cause and effect principle that governs the universe.

Think good and do good, get good results.

Think bad and do bad, get bad results.

Now it isn't quite as simple as this, but that's the general idea.

Actions are created in two main ways: through conscious intention, and subconscious reaction.

In Karma yoga, we are successful when we act consciously with good intentions, and purify our subconscious negative habitual patterns of thinking and behavior.

Conscious intentions can be driven by many things, including animalistic or egoic desires, so we need to temper these by being conscious of what is driving them, and aligning them as much as possible with good intentions.

Usually actions done selflessly, for the benefit of all, arise from the highest form of intention.

In selfless action, we don't act for "I", but for all, and in acting from enlightened self-interest our personal good becomes one with the greater good.

Acting in this way gives peace of mind, and removes agitation caused by selfish behavior. It creates harmony in our lives and the world.

Let me quickly clarify that enlightened self-interest and selfless action don't deny your personal desires or ambitions.

That would be ridiculous.

Karma yoga says you should act on the natural inclinations and desires that you have, but always in a way that is harmonious and helpful to others and the environment.

Conscious action is acting from enlightened self-interest.

The other method of action we're concerned about happens on the subconscious level. Here lay the hidden habits that either support or undermine our happiness.

The negative subconscious habits we work to purify in yoga are called *vasanas* or *samskaras*.

These tendencies reinforce attachment to the ego, and are the seeds of our suffering.

Vasanas can be good or bad, but we want to address the negative ones in our spiritual practice.

The most deeply ingrained *vasana* is the idea that “I am a separate individual body and mind”.

This “I-thought” is the structure the ego is built on, and the attachment it creates to the body and mind is the cause of suffering in our lives.

I'll repeat what I mentioned earlier about the ego since it's so often gotten wrong:

The ego isn't bad, it's our attachment to the ego that's bad.

We must transcend this mental conditioning if we hope to attain lasting peace and spiritual awakening.

I'm not going to sugar coat it for you – overcoming these subconscious tendencies and attachments is hard work, even when we become conscious of them.

Sometimes these patterns are rooted in trauma and require therapy or counseling as well as spiritual practice.

Purifying *vasnas* and bad habits is the real ‘work’ that is done in yoga and all spiritual disciplines.

When these negative habits are removed, we are care-free and joyous, like when we were kids. We realize our joyful pure nature once again.

Until they are addressed, these habits of thinking and doing remain heavy burdens on us.

In Karma yoga, we actively address these patterns in the world where they were created, uproot them, and replace them with conscious, moral, and selfless action whenever we can.

Summary: Action is created by conscious intention and subconscious reaction. Successful actions are done consciously with good intentions, and work to purify your subconscious habits (vasanas) that cause you suffering.

3. Get Into Flow By Letting Go

We've established that letting go of results prevents suffering and brings about success, but this mindset can also help you perform better too.

Flow is a state where we are completely one with the action we're doing.

We've all experienced it before while running, writing, creating, or working.

It's an ideal way of acting since action naturally flows through us without any hinderance of the ego, or the slower deliberation of the conscious mind.

Let's look at the example of an archer to see how letting go can get you into flow, and improve your performance.

Imagine an archer in a competition steps up to shoot an arrow.

He steps up to his turn with the intention and desire to hit his target.

So, he begins to act by pulling back the bow string, slowing his breath, focusing on the target, aiming carefully, and finally releasing the arrow.

Now, here comes the key point:

If the archer is only thinking about hitting the target this will interfere with his ability to focus, aim and achieve his goal.

By thinking about what he wants, it doesn't help the archer aim more accurately. It actually prevents him from focusing on and hitting his target.

Instead, the archer surrenders the fate of the arrow in the future, and focuses on what he can control in the moment — his breath, his aim, how far he pulls his bow string, etc.

From this example, we can see how our intentions and actions are related, and why it's important not to focus too much on results if we want to perform well.

The anxiety of thinking about results interferes with your ability to perform at your best.

Anthony De Mello, a famous Indian Jesuit priest and psychotherapist, commented on this archer example:

“

When the archer shoots for no particular prize, he has all his skills; when he shoots to win a brass buckle, he is already nervous; when he shoots for a gold prize, he goes blind, sees two targets, and is out of his mind. His skill has not changed, but the prize divides him.”

Focusing on results causes anxiety and tension, which blocks the flow states where we perform optimally.

The paradox is, when you let go of results you can get into flow easier, perform better, and are more likely to succeed in fulfilling your desires.

The next time you are performing under pressure keep this in mind. Focus on the moment, get into flow, and let go.

Summary: The secret to getting into flow, and performing optimally, is focusing on what you're doing in the moment, and not getting caught up in thoughts or expectations about the future.

4. *The Wisdom of Letting Go*

The essence Karma yoga is letting go of the results, or 'fruits' of our actions, and acting in service of the highest good.

This can be difficult for us to accept, especially given the conditioning we've acquired throughout our lives.

But there is deep wisdom in surrendering the results of your actions.

If we contemplate this, we can see why.

A famous quote in the [Bhagavad Gita](#) summarizes this truth perfectly:

“

You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.”

What this means is that you have a right to do the actions natural to you, but you cannot ultimately control the universal field where all the complex interactions of your actions take place.

Neither should you be drawn to inaction in the face of this complexity, since action is natural to us as human beings, even though we don't control outcomes.

If you could control the universal field of action, then you would be entitled to the results of your action, but you don't!

In this sense, you are not “entitled” to the fruits of what you do.

We are not gods. All our actions are susceptible to circumstances and effects that aren't in our control.

The best laid plans often go to waste, as they say.

No matter how well you prepare, train or try to control a situation, you are ultimately not in control of the entire field of creation.

You can't control outcomes. So, why become attached to results that are ultimately beyond your ability to control?

We must learn an aspect of surrender when we act.

This state of surrender is actually a state of profound wisdom, which aligns with the universal truth stated in the Bhagavad Gita.

To attach ourselves to a specific result is actually a subtle form of ignorance about our place in the world, and how it functions.

Another important thing to consider, is that the Divine Intelligence that governs creation knows best how to assign the results of our actions.

It's this power that is behind all life, and dreamed the universe into existence.

The Divine Intelligence that governs the universe guides our actions and their results for the highest good.

We can only envision a limited set of outcomes, which are usually based on fears or basic desires.

Why desire an outcome, when you can be open to the unlimited potential that exists when you act without expectation?

Why fear a result when all that happens aligns with the highest good?

Even if you don't believe in a divine principle, results are still not in your control. Be wise about your actions. Do not fear or attach yourself to outcomes.

When you act from this place of surrender you become favorable to everything that happens as a result of your actions.

You understand from this awakened perspective that all the fruits you reap are part of the greater good.

Summary: You should neither become attached or fear any outcome, since you cannot control the universal field your actions play out in. Acting from a place of surrender, and being favorable to all outcomes, is acting with the highest wisdom.

5. *Your Duties & You*

You know that feeling you get in your chest when you're not doing something you should be doing?

That slow burning, anxious feeling?

That's the feeling you get when you ignore your duties.

Performing your duties is an essential part of success.

Contrary to what the modern world says, lasting fulfillment doesn't come from fame or money, it comes from fulfilling your duties.

Duties are a form of sacrifice that you must make. The more you try to avoid your duties, the more anxiety you feel.

Think about how much your mother and father sacrificed for you, so that you could have a good life.

Or the people who worked to provide the food on your table, the clothes you wear, the technology you use, and the content you consume.

How much blood, sweat and tears went into that?

We must perform our duties, since the performance of duties is what allows the world to exist for the benefit of all.

The sun rises, the moon orbits the Earth, tides rise and fall, birds chirp, animals hunt for food, and human beings attend to their duties.

The order of nature sustains the well-being of all life according to the duties each living thing performs.

Of course, the ego has its own desires and ambitions that often go contrary to the duties natural to us.

One of the most common problems of modern humans is the conflict between what we know we should – the duties we know we need to perform – and what we actually do.

Martin Luther King, Jr., another perfect example of a Karma Yogi, explains this conflict in his brilliant book of sermons [Strength to Love](#):

“

One of the greatest tragedies of life is that men seldom bridge the gulf between practice and profession, between doing and saying. A persistent schizophrenia leaves so many of us tragically divided against ourselves... This strange dichotomy, this agonizing gulf between the ought and the is, represents the tragic theme of man's earthly pilgrimage.”

How often you know what you should do, but don't do it?! This maddening state of affairs causes so much conflict in ourselves.

If we neglect our duties in favor of other actions, even if we become wildly rich and famous from them, we will not get the contentment and satisfaction that comes from fulfilling them.

The example of a miserable yet successful businessman who's too busy with work to attend to family duties comes to mind.

The [Bhagavad Gita](#) has another great quote on this:

“

It is far better to perform one's natural prescribed duty, though tinged with faults, than to perform another's prescribed duty, though perfectly.”

So, what are these duties that you're prescribed to do? How do you know what they are?

Your duties are prescribed to you based on the relationships that you have to yourself, the world, and others.

You may be a father, mother, boss, coworker, or daughter.

All of these relationships have their own set of duties associated with them.

We are all citizens of this world, and that requires its own set of duties like caring for nature and the environment.

We also have duties to ourselves.

To take care of our bodies, to serve our self-interest in a harmonious way, and to learn, create, grow and evolve.

If you love painting, then you have a duty to yourself to paint even if you have other seemingly more important work to do.

We also have a relationship to God, Divine Intelligence, and it's our duty to cultivate that relationship too.

This is perhaps our most important, yet overlooked duty in life.

Duties are the compass for your actions, and give you constant guidance on what we should or should not do.

By performing your duties you attain satisfaction, contentment and peace of mind more precious than any amount of wealth.

Summary: Your relationship to yourself, others, and Divine Intelligence defines your duties and guides your actions. Acting in accordance to your duties brings you lasting contentment and success, ignoring them creates suffering.

So, there you go.

The 5 secrets I've shared with you are a summary of Karma Yoga, and how to become victorious in everything you do.

If I had to boil the secrets of Karma yoga down into a few quick points, they would be these:

- Successful actions are done without attachment
- Don't fear or attach yourself to outcomes you don't control
- Develop an attitude of favorableness to all outcomes
- Serving others is really serving yourself
- Follow your natural inclinations, don't become inactive or neglect them
- Doing your duties brings lasting fulfillment, not fame or wealth
- Flow states happen naturally when you let go, and focus on the moment
- The universe makes sacrifices for all life, so we must make sacrifices in our life

Apply these principles and practices in your daily life.

Take one step at a time.

Here are a few practices you can try starting today:

- Reflect on the motivations of your actions. Are you serving your ego, or your higher good?
- What negative habits (vasanas) are creating the most challenges for you? What's one small thing you can start doing right now to overcome them?
- Throughout the week, try to get into a flow state by focusing completely on what you're doing in the present. Do you perform better?

Try incorporating small but significant steps to attaining equanimity through your actions by using Karma Yoga.

**Win the battle of good and evil that wages within you.
There is no greater success in life.**

And when you lose, don't get down on yourself.

You may lose battles, but with persistent effort you will surely win the war, and like Arjuna attain victory in all that you do!

Victory to You!