

Pick Up the Bow

Ancient Indian Wisdom for People Who Work Under Pressure



Forty-seven lines from the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Arthashastra and the epics, each one tested against a modern working week. Print it, pin it up, and read one before your hardest meeting.

OPENING · *Naming the Mistake*

- 1 Own the effort completely. Release the outcome completely. The bow is in your hand.
- 2 When a problem survives every fix, stop trying harder. Go one floor deeper.
- 3 If your effort number is missing from the story, you have written yourself a permission slip, not an explanation.
- 4 A full calendar and a productive quarter are different claims. Find your four real hours and defend them.

PART ONE · *The Self You're So Sure Of*

- 5 You cannot change a story you refuse to read. Write the sentence you have been avoiding.
- 6 You are not your thoughts. You are what you do despite them.
- 7 Anything that can be taken by someone else's decision is a costume. Build your life on what remains.
- 8 The room can outvote you. It cannot out-evidence you. Write the memo.
- 9 Report first. Judge later. Never in the same sentence.
- 10 You can't control what you feel on rung four. You can control what you feed on rung one.
- 11 The pleasant always has good reasons. Judge your choices by their direction, not their arguments.
- 12 Satisfaction feels exactly like truth. The flattering answer is only ever the first one.
- 13 Before every fast decision, name the loudest feeling in the room. Then decide who is driving.
- 14 A desire that never becomes a decision has stopped being patience. It is a slow way of saying no.
- 15 Difficulty is the climate, not the interruption. Stay upright while it passes.

- 16 A verdict reached from silence is a story, not a fact. Give the wind twenty-four hours to catch up.

PART TWO · *The Work*

- 17 Name the one thing that must work. Ship it. Let reality write the rest of your list.
- 18 Before you churn anything, write down what will get worse first, with dates.
- 19 Your work done badly beats their work done well. It will cost you status. Pay it.
- 20 Audit your attention, not your priorities. Somewhere in there is a deer.
- 21 Strength that cannot ask for help is just a slower way to drown.
- 22 Generosity that keeps a ledger is a loan. Give as if nothing will come back.
- 23 Being right about whose fault it is changes nothing the problem cares about. Carry it anyway.
- 24 Intensity is not discipline. Measure, held daily, will outwork every sprint you have ever run.
- 25 Effort fuelled by a rival never finishes. Find out who your work is secretly for.
- 26 Trace your life back to the want that started it. Make sure the want was yours.

PART THREE · *Power*

- 27 The system is terrain, not destiny. Draw your map, fill your treasury, move on your own timeline.
- 28 Use the Gita for your mind and the Arthashastra for your map. Ask both questions every morning.
- 29 Your ceiling is set by your weakest limb. Starve the one that gets the applause.
- 30 Most wars are first-rung problems fought with fourth-rung weapons. Ask before you offer; offer before you force.
- 31 The absence of rules is never neutral. One rule, enforced once in public, beats six years of good intentions.

- 32 Schedule the listening before the doing. A busy leader who isn't wakeful is just blind at speed.
- 33 Do the job completely. Keep saying whose job it is. That is how you earn the next one.
- 34 Never pay a gatekeeper with the skill that makes you dangerous. Approval is not worth your thumb.
- 35 Before you take a rivalry personally, check the map. Your ally is your rival's other neighbour.
- 36 Owe your benefactor gratitude. Never owe them your judgement.
- 37 Before you respond to a failure, separate what it deserves from how you feel. Be predictable.

PART FOUR · *What Outlasts You*

- 38 Invisible progress is still progress. Compounding works in silence, then all at once. Show up anyway.
- 39 Reputation is who you are when watched. Character is who you are when the promise can't be enforced.
- 40 Reputation is built from the bottom up. Every person you keep waiting is drawing your map.
- 41 The hard half got you promoted. The half you cut is what keeps the promotion from costing you everything else.
- 42 Everyone knows life is short. Almost nobody counts. Count.
- 43 Do the deed first. Let the song catch up.
- 44 Ending what you built isn't failure. Creation and destruction are the same hand, mid-dance.
- 45 Protect the work, not the name. The river was always made of sea.
- 46 Hard seasons are not permission to stop the maintenance. Keep tending your leg of the bull.
- 47 You already know which war you're in. Pick up the bow.