



It is Better to Live Your Own Destiny Imperfectly than to Live an Imitation of Somebody Else's Life With Perfection

May Your Choices Reflect Your Hopes, Not Your Fears.

– Nelson Mandela

The **Bhagavad Gita** teaches us to embrace our **unique purpose** and **individuality**. Living authentically may not always be perfect, but it fosters **self-awareness, resilience, and fulfillment**. On the other hand, **imitating someone else**, even perfectly, can lead to **inner emptiness** and **dissatisfaction**. It underscores how authenticity enables individuals to navigate challenges, contribute meaningfully to **society**, and achieve **self-realization**.

Every individual is born with unique **talents, aspirations, and circumstances**. The concept of **swadharma**, or one's **own duty**, deeply rooted in **Indian philosophy**, suggests that each person has a role tailored to their nature and abilities. Attempting to replicate someone else's life may seem alluring, especially if that path appears successful, but it often leads to internal discord. The pursuit of **personal destiny**, even with its imperfections, aligns one's actions with their true self, fostering harmony and contentment.

Consider the **story of Arjuna** from the **Mahabharata**. On the **battlefield of Kurukshetra**, **Arjuna** is initially overwhelmed by **doubt** and **despair**, reluctant to fight against his own relatives. Lord Krishna advises him to embrace his role as a warrior, emphasizing that abandoning his dharma would be a greater sin than fighting imperfectly. Arjuna's eventual acceptance of his path exemplifies the triumph of individual destiny over external expectations.

Mahatma Gandhi's journey is a testament to the power of authenticity. Born into a **middle-class family** in Gujarat, Gandhi's early life was unremarkable. However, his experiences in **South Africa** and his **deep introspection** led him to **embrace nonviolence (ahimsa)** and **truth (satya)** as guiding principles. Instead of imitating Western leaders or adopting their aggressive strategies, Gandhi crafted a unique path that resonated with India's ethos. The **Salt March of 1930**, a pivotal event in **India's freedom struggle**, showcased Gandhi's courage to walk his own path. The **act of making salt** from seawater was symbolic yet powerful, demonstrating the strength of simplicity and authenticity. Despite **facing criticism** and **skepticism**, **Gandhi's unwavering commitment** to his principles inspired millions and secured India's independence. If he had followed the example of other leaders, his influence might have been lessened.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's life illustrates the rewards of **pursuing one's destiny** despite humble beginnings. Born into a fisherman's family in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, Kalam could have been deterred by his circumstances. He followed his passion for **science and technology**, contributing significantly to **India's defense and space programs**. **Kalam's authenticity** extended beyond his professional achievements. As the **President of India**, he lived a **simple, humble life**, connecting with students and citizens across the country. His refusal to imitate the lavish lifestyle often associated with political leaders earned him admiration and respect. By embracing his unique journey, Kalam left an indelible mark on India's progress.

Indian mythology is replete with stories emphasizing the importance of living one's own destiny. One such tale is that of **Karna** from the **Mahabharata**. Karna, the son of the Sun God, faced numerous challenges

due to his **caste** and **upbringing**. Despite his **extraordinary skills** and valor, **Karna struggled with his identity and allegiance**. **Karna's life** is a powerful reminder of the **cost of imitating others**. His **gratitude to Duryodhana** often clashed with his **moral values**. If Karna had embraced his **true self** and followed dharma, his story might have been less tragic.

Living an imitation of someone else's life, no matter how perfectly, often results in dissatisfaction. This is evident in modern society, where **social media amplifies** the pressure to conform. People frequently compare their lives to curated versions of others, leading to anxiety and self-doubt.

In the Indian context, the **competitive nature of education and careers** often pushes individuals to follow conventional paths. For instance, many students pursue engineering or medicine, not out of passion but due to **societal expectations**. While some succeed, others struggle with discontent and burnout, highlighting the drawbacks of ignoring personal interests and aptitudes.

Tata's leadership of the **Tata Group** exemplifies the **power of authenticity**. Unlike many business magnates who prioritize profit over people, Tata focused on **ethical practices** and **social responsibility**. His decision to develop the **Tata Nano**, the **world's cheapest car**, stemmed from a desire to provide **affordable transportation** for **Indian families**. Tata's innovative approach and commitment to his **values** set him apart. By staying true to his vision, he transformed the Tata Group into a global conglomerate while maintaining its core principles. His success underscores the importance of embracing one's unique perspective rather than imitating others.

Mary Kom's journey from a small village in **Manipur** to becoming a world champion boxer is an inspiring example of **living one's destiny**. Despite societal pressures and financial challenges, Kom pursued her passion for boxing. Her perseverance and authenticity earned her numerous accolades, including an Olympic medal. Kom's story resonates with millions, especially women aspiring to **break stereotypes**. Had she conformed to traditional roles or sought to emulate others, her extraordinary achievements might never have been realized.

Understanding one's strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations is the first step toward living authentically. Indian practices like yoga and meditation can aid in self-discovery. Embracing one's destiny often involves overcoming obstacles. Resilience, as demonstrated by figures like Gandhi and Kalam, is crucial for success. Stepping away from societal norms requires courage. By following their unique paths, individuals like Mary Kom and Ratan Tata have shown that authenticity leads to fulfillment. Living authentically often results in meaningful contributions to society. Whether through innovation, leadership, or social work, individuals who embrace their destiny inspire others and drive progress.

The wisdom of living one's own destiny, even imperfectly, is a guiding principle for a fulfilling life. Indian examples from history, mythology, and contemporary times highlight the transformative power of authenticity. By embracing our unique roles and navigating challenges with resilience, we can lead lives of purpose and joy. In a world that often glorifies perfection and conformity, the courage to be oneself is a revolutionary act. As the Bhagavad Gita teaches, true success lies not in imitating others but in walking our own path, however imperfect it may seem. By doing so, we honor our individuality, enrich our communities, and contribute to the greater good.

Choices are the Hinges of Destiny.

— Pythagoras