

Bend We Must but We Should Never Crawl

Flexibility in approach and resilience in life are the hallmark of a successful person. So, we should not be someone who would not budge from one's declared stand or position. We should always keep some room for adjustment and as far as possible we should try to accommodate others' standpoint. Also, as long as it does not interfere with the basic tenets of our values and does not prick our conscience, we should try to make a compromise in the better interests of overall peace and harmony in our life. As they say, if we cannot change the world, then we must change ourselves. If we cannot defeat them, we should join them.

Sometimes, one should also be prepared to apologise and compromise if the same promises to serve the larger interests, but we should not do it if the same makes our continued survival or existence devoid of dignity. Everyone may not be good. But there is always something good in everyone. We should never make a permanent image of anyone because every saint has a past and every sinner has a future. Therefore, we should never conclude a person by his present status because time has great power of turning even a useless coal into a valuable diamond.

However, in inter-personal relationships, we should not stoop and bend beyond a point. While we should always show a flexible approach in improving a relationship, we should always be the first to apologise and compromise, be ready to forget the past if the same can give a chance of survival to a failing relationship.

But there may be some who would want us to walk all the miles all alone, without themselves taking even a single step. Our gentleness and humility should not be mistaken and construed as a sign of weakness. Being a good person is like being a goal-keeper. No matter how many goals we save, people will remember only the one we missed. After all, it always takes two to tango. The burden of correcting a relationship should not lie solely with us. If we have taken ten steps, the same must be responded by, at least, one step from the other side. Bend we must, but we should never crawl. Our goodness should not be mistaken for a weakness. As Chanakya said, "Even if a snake is not poisonous, it should pretend to be venomous."

It has often been noticed that if we keep on bending all the time, we may crack someday ourselves or people may ride us roughshod. They often start taking us for granted and stop

valuing us. Conversely, it also happens that by deciding to bend once, we start doing it so often that it completely changes one day. Many of us are not able to maintain a balance in their life and with regular compromises, their entire character changes negatively over time. So, as and when we decide to bend, compromise or adjust, the same should be in keeping the larger values and purpose otherwise we shall soon lose our dignity and character. While making these compromises, we often get so swayed that we lose a sense of proportion and end up completely compromising with our values and principles.

Standing by our values is what makes us the person we are. Compromising our values to achieve our goals would not make us feel fulfilled and satisfied. In a way, we would not be honest and we might feel like a cheat. Our conscience would keep on gnawing at us. So what is the point of achieving the goal we are pursuing so passionately if we can compromise on the same? What would it bring us that would be valuable enough to overcome our way of living and being?

If we feel the only way for us to achieve certain goals is to compromise our values, either we don't value our principles to find solutions or the goals themselves are not really worth achieving. If our goals are in conflict with our values, we are not being honest with ourselves. Our real values are reflected in how we actually live. So, we should be very careful and do a lot of cost-benefit analysis before we bend or compromise with a person, a value or a principle. As winning becomes a habit, similarly losing our values or compromising or bending also becomes a habit, a bad one though. And a bad habit would only further debase us and take us towards our ruin. So, come what may we should not compromise with our basic values and principles.

Salient Points

- Flexibility in approach and resilience in life are hallmark of a successful person.
- If we cannot change the world, then we must change ourselves.
- Time has great power of turning even a useless coal into a valuable diamond.
- Our humility should not be construed as a sign of weakness.
- Bend we must, but we should never crawl.
- If our goals are in conflict with our values, we are not being honest with ourselves.
- Come what may, we should not compromise with our values and principles.

Glossary

Hallmark: a distinctive feature

Conscience: moral sense of right and wrong

Debase: degrade

To gnaw: cause persistent anxiety