

SHORTCUTS/SOFT OPTIONS CAN HARM YOU

The article provides a comprehensive set of suggestions. However, it is essential, to begin with just a few simple ones you think are most vital for you and do not take much time. Try these for a week or two. After you see beneficial results of these, you may like to include some more.

We are all tempted to adopt shortcuts or resort to soft options all the time in life. Some everyday examples are: Using the lift for the 2nd-3rd floor, using car/motorcycle for a very short distance. We feel comfortable and happy using these days in and days out. However, what happens when the lift/car is not available for some reason, and it is an emergency? Then we will find it so very difficult to climb stairs or walk some distance because our body has lost the capacity to do such simple things and enjoy it. Wherever we go, the body will expect similar comfort, and if it is not available, we will feel miserable. Even worse is that our genes become weaker and pass on that to our future generations. Obesity in Europe, the USA, or other developed worlds is due to such abuse.

In student life, we feel that copying is a smart thing to do for assignments, lab reports, or even during exams, if possible. It always begins with some harmless-looking copying. Very soon, we start loving it so much that we extend it to more and more things. However, this is always accompanied by a fear of getting caught; The consequent punishment could be very harsh (even expulsion or a semester drop). We don't realize this, but every time we employ a shortcut, even if no one knows it, but we do. There is thus an immediate disharmony, anxiety, worry, fear, and consequently, unhappiness. There is also an inevitable loss of self-esteem because we know we are doing wrong things and accepting incompetence in doing it rigorously. We have even more disharmony whenever we face teachers/courses in which these things are impossible because we have to work hard, which we hate. It inevitably leads to very poor grades as well as lots of stress and unhappiness.

A similar thing happens when we choose easy but not useful courses. It becomes like drug addiction without our realizing it. Even if we get good grades, we have become weaker in our analytical, intellectual, and physical capacity. We know we are taking an escapist route, but temptation overpowers us. Again, lower self-esteem and worries about the future due to compromise are inevitable. Interviewers for jobs are very smart in assessing our weak/strong choices in academics. It invariably affects the selection process.

Some students feel that they know what kind of job they will do in the future and select courses accordingly. However, such a narrow approach is fraught with danger. First, you may change your job perception and may regret the choice of courses. Secondly, the market situation may affect the job scenario. Hence, broad-based course choices are always safe.

The brand name of Institutes like IITD gets created because of the sustained performance of the Alumni over many decades. However, the foundations for their success are in the rigorous training provided by such Institutes. Students take admission to such Institutes knowing the hard grind involved, but they don't mind that because they are also aware of the payoffs. If the word

goes around that IITD students resort to shortcuts, then within no time, the brand image can get tarnished, and the employers will start looking at the pass-outs with suspicion. Whether many students did it or not will not matter. Hence, it is the responsibility of all to nurture and enhance the brand image of IITD.

When we go for a job or business, we won't perform to a level that our academic performance indicates. Since we are obsessed with higher performance, we are forced to look for shortcuts/cheating to show results despite not having the aptitude or capability. This then becomes a lifelong dependence. Even if we are somehow managing to fool people and deliver results, we can't be happy. Businesses can't survive with continued cheating. The stress and worries will not only affect our professional life, but it will also affect our personal life with family and friends. Ultimately, our professional and personal life will be disastrous.

In professional life, corruption, cheating on quality are examples of shortcuts. We justify this by saying that all others do it and that it is necessary for survival. But there is no end to it, and you have to do it more and more like drugs.

Choosing to make strong efforts in everything we do, on the contrary, makes our mind and body face any challenges in life. We can perform duty with confidence, without stress and worries. We are then successful in our professional as well as personal life. Best performers are generally from this category.

A story about Bengal tigers in a circus explains what all this means. The circus in which such tigers performed for a long time had a financial crisis. The owners released the tigers in the forests. Sometime later, it was discovered that the wild dogs killed all the tigers. This happened because of the ferocious tigers, whom all animals in the forest fear, had lost their physical strength and agility to hunt and kill the prey. They were given meat in their cage whenever they were hungry. In life, we also do the same things. We are the tigers, and we have served easy meat to ourselves through shortcuts and cheating. Because of this attitude, when we are thrown into the ruthless world where actual performance matters, others quickly overtake us. In desperation, we try even more cheating because that's what we have trained ourselves with all along. Very soon, our whole life becomes a disaster. We may blame others, but we have ourselves been responsible for all this.

Shortcuts: If you are allowed to design your degree certificate, grade cards, you can put any CGPA, awards you want. You don't have to study for four years. No one will ever know. The only condition is that you must use it for a job or a business. Would you then like to have one with 10 CGPA? Why not? This is the ultimate shortcut? It should also be the same as saying 'no' to other shortcuts if you would not like it because the effects are the same. Small shortcuts are like free drugs given by drug peddlers to make you an addict and dependent on them. Then you ask for more and more and are prepared to pay more and more. In academic life also, it is the same. Unfortunately, here, you are the drug peddler as well as the drug addict. If you are already a drug addict of any severity, you can perform the de-addiction miracle.