

# Finding Order in Chaos

A master calls his ardent disciple home one day. The student finds the guru waiting for him in his fenced yard with four identical puppies. The guru lets them loose and asks the disciple to catch them all. The energetic puppies run haphazardly. The chase is chaotic. The disciple tries to catch one, then the other, and finally sits down exhausted after failing to catch any. Next, the master puts collars with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 on each puppy, and instructs the disciple to catch them in the ascending order. The disciple goes sequentially and despite all the other puppies running around him, he manages to catch each puppy as it tires and slows down.

*The master explains, “We should prioritize our goals and then pursue them non-stop.” The disciple learns the value of focus and perseverance.*

The next day, when the disciple reaches the school, he notices commotion. Earlier, the students had discovered puppies running around in the campus. Each puppy had a numbered collar. They had managed to round up puppies with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5, and were now frantically searching for the puppy with the number 4 collar. The disciple smiles and wonders—why did the master replace the number 4 with number 5 on the fourth puppy?

*The master educates the disciple, “Some goals are like a mirage—we should know when to stop.” This time, the disciple learns the value of defocusing and letting go.*

Focus on the goal is important, but so is defocusing from the ambient noise. Both go hand in hand. So much so, that we often get confused over which goals to pursue, and which ones to relinquish. How then do we differentiate between our right and wrong choices? Perhaps we should read the story again; there may be a clue lurking between the lines...

*In both the incidents, the approach is the same—to catch all the puppies till the pecking order is complete. However, the outcome is reverse. In the first incident, the disciple’s approach keeps on “reducing” the chaos with each captured puppy. In the second incident, the students’ approach keeps on “increasing” the chaos because of the missing fictitious puppy.*

Simply put, the key lies in the direction of the chaos. If our focus—our insistence on order—is streamlining everyone's life around us, then our actions are in the right direction. However, if our objectives—our obsession with order—are messing up everyone's life, it's time to withdraw. This principle applies to both personal and professional relationships.