



## Hack #2: Accept the world

Siddharth had settled in now into his role. Yes, there was no sign of respect and recognition yet , but his job crafting, just cause and vision made his life a bit better. In some time, Siddharth also started referring his friends to DeceptiveGlow. One such friend is Pranesh. Pranesh was also from his town but had studied in a different college. Pranesh was not as talented as Siddharth. He was not a workaholic like Siddharth. But Pranesh was street-smart.

Pranesh quickly became the favorite of the bosses. He ensured that he got visibility for whatever little work he did. Siddharth couldn't get his head around the unethical practices, however Pranesh was ok with it. In fact he relished it. Soon, it was time for another promotion cycle. Siddharth although he was senior to Pranesh was not promoted. Pranesh was promoted instead. Siddharth felt a deep pain, when he heard Pranesh would be his new boss.

Now, Siddharth couldn't believe what had just happened. He had referred a friend who was not hard working or talented. That friend had been promoted and made his boss. Siddharth was now furious. He wanted to blast Vishnusharma for all the Gyaan he had given about Job crafting, Vision and Just cause. He couldn't stand this. But, he need to know how this decision was taken. He set up a 1-o-1 with his current boss.

The 1-o-1 with his boss was still more shocking. His boss gave him a list of great things which Pranesh had done. Most of what he told him was Siddharth's work. Pranesh had taken credit for it. His boss told him about great results which Pranesh had brought in. Siddharth knew it was pure luck that the success had come. Although chance played a role, Pranesh was attributed to it.

Not only that, but his boss also seemed to know even the minor mistakes Siddharth had made in the last year. How could he possibly know all this? Post this, Siddharth was casually chatting with another colleague, when the colleague told him that Pranesh would bad mouth Siddharth to his boss over their *chutta* time. Apparently, Pranesh and his boss were smoking buddies.

Siddharth's head was spinning. He had underestimated the role politics and luck played in the corporate world. He called Vishnusharma and told him about what had just happened and how Vishnusharma was failing in his job to make DeceptiveGlow ethical.

You had told me about just cause , vision and job crafting and all those lofty ideas, but right now none of this has made me successful.'

First calm down. Those are just the necessary conditions to make your job digestible, they cannot make you successful. '

Ok, I am calm now, tell me how can I be successful?’

‘I can give you some ideas, but you will have to accept me as your mentor.’

‘OK, I accept your mentorship. Tell me how I can be successful’.

‘First, let me ask a question—is the World fair?’ ‘No. Going by what I have just seen’

‘Good. before we get into how to be successful, we must accept the world as is. The Western world is rife with literature on Justice , Equality and Freedom. These are just ideals. The world can never be that ideal. We can pursue them but never achieve them. Wherever there are organizations, there will be politics , power plays and back-biting. It is simply foolish to assume otherwise and a sure shot way to fail in our vision.

What do you want me to do?’

‘I think you should start a practice of reading Panchatantra regularly. Not just read but also reflect on it.’

‘Now, I don’t have time for that, tell me what Panchatantra talks about this topic’

## 2500 years ago

After having contemplated the importance of money, Vardhamanaka, a young and ambitious merchant, decided to embark on an entrepreneurial journey to Mathura. The ancient city was renowned for its thriving commerce and rich history, a place where fortunes could be made. Years of careful planning had led to this moment, and Vardhamanaka was determined to succeed despite the known dangers of the journey.

In his retinue were two home-grown bulls, Sanjivaka and Nandaka. These bulls, though considered auspicious, were primarily beasts of burden, essential for transporting his goods. Sanjivaka, a sturdy beast with a calm demeanor, and Nandaka, equally robust but with a more spirited nature, were the cornerstone of his trade endeavors. Together with his loyal servants, Vardhamanaka set off, the promise of prosperity guiding their steps.

The journey was arduous, taking them through dense forests that whispered of lurking dangers. The canopy above blocked out much of the sunlight, casting eerie shadows that played tricks on the weary travelers' minds. The air was thick with the scent of foliage and the occasional distant roar of a predator. Despite the unease, Vardhamanaka remained focused, his eyes set on the prize that awaited in Mathura.

One fateful afternoon, disaster struck. Sanjivaka, while navigating a particularly treacherous part of the forest, stumbled and fell into a concealed pit. The bull let out a pained bellow as a sharp rock pierced its flank.

Vardhamanaka's heart sank at the sight of his faithful companion in agony. He quickly ordered the group to set up camp, determined to tend to Sanjivaka's wounds.

For three days, Vardhamanaka stayed by Sanjivaka's side, cleaning and dressing the wound with the limited supplies they had. He fed the bull with the best forage they could find and whispered words of encouragement to the suffering animal. His dedication was unwavering, but the forest around them grew more ominous with each passing day.

During their stay, Vardhamanaka was approached by his fellow merchants, who had joined him on this perilous journey to Mathura. They were seasoned traders, accustomed to the risks of travel, but the forest's dangers were making them increasingly anxious. "Vardhamanaka," one of them said, his voice tinged with concern, "it is too dangerous to stay here any longer. We risk our lives every moment we linger in this forest. We must move on."

Vardhamanaka understood their fear but couldn't abandon Sanjivaka. He made a difficult decision. "I will leave two of my most trusted servants here to take care of Sanjivaka. The rest of us will continue to Mathura. We will send help as soon as we arrive."

The merchants nodded in agreement, respecting Vardhamanaka's resolve. Reluctantly, Vardhamanaka left two of his most trusted men with the injured bull, promising to return for them soon. With a heavy heart, he and the rest of the group pressed on towards Mathura. The forest seemed to close in around them, each step forward feeling like a step deeper into the maw of danger.

The two servants, however, were paralyzed with fear. As soon as Vardhamanaka was out of sight, they succumbed to their terror. They could not bear the thought of staying alone in the forest, vulnerable to its threats. In their panic, they made a hasty decision. They would return to Vardhamanaka and lie, claiming that Sanjivaka had succumbed to his injuries.

When they re-joined the group, they spun their tale with downcast eyes. "Master, we did all we could, but Sanjivaka didn't make it. The forest is too perilous to stay any longer." Vardhamanaka's heart ached at the news. He mourned the loss of Sanjivaka but knew they had to continue. His focus shifted back to reaching Mathura and ensuring the safety of his remaining retinue.

Unbeknownst to them, Sanjivaka was far from dead. The resilient bull, left alone, found an inner strength to heal. Nature, in its strange way, provided the necessary herbs and sustenance. Sanjivaka's wound began to close, and his strength returned.

## *Today..*

Panchatantra is clear from the outset that the world is not just or ideal as the Western world would say. First, it clearly states a back-biting Jackal was successful. It doesn't say the Jackal, because of its untruthful nature, was killed or punished. Next, there are a lot of things which are not in your control. Like the yoke breaking down and Sanjivaka getting injured. The Merchant leaving him. And as luck would have it, Sanjivaka survived. As you would see, subsequently, he would be killed as well through deceit. There is deceit, unforeseen forces, luck, differences in mindsets, and values which make up the world of Artha or 'work world'. One must accept it and expect it.

“Ok, understood. Now, what do you want me to do?” Siddharth asked, his voice laced with curiosity and a hint of apprehension.

“I have created a workbook here. It will allow you to get some clarity on the version of the politics that is working in DeceptiveGlow. This will clarify your mind. I am sure you will come to me when you need me. I would request you to read the Panchatantra.”

Siddharth cut the call, feeling a mix of determination and scepticism. He downloaded the worksheet and began to delve into it, hoping to change his outlook about his work.



DeceptiveGlow, the company where Siddharth worked, was a place filled with cutthroat competition and backdoor politics. Siddharth had always been a straightforward person, believing in hard work and honesty. But lately, he had started feeling out of place, as if the very fabric of his values was being tested. He often found himself at odds with the prevailing ethos of manipulation and deceit.

As he opened the workbook, the first task asked him to reflect on his experiences at DeceptiveGlow. He was to identify instances where deceit or manipulation had played a role in the outcomes he had witnessed. Siddharth sighed and began to write.

The first memory that came to mind was the time when a colleague, Raj, had taken credit for a project Siddharth had worked tirelessly on. Raj's smooth talking and backbiting had earned him accolades, while Siddharth was left in the shadows. Then there was the incident with the budget report, where another colleague, Mira, had falsified figures to make her department look better, only to have it backfire later. Despite her deceit being uncovered, Mira faced no real consequences.

The more Siddharth wrote, the more he realized how pervasive the culture of deceit was in his workplace. It wasn't just about individual incidents but a systemic issue. He paused and remembered the story of Sanjivaka from the Panchatantra.

Just like the injured bull, he felt abandoned and left to fend for himself in a treacherous environment. Yet, Sanjivaka had survived against the odds, only to face deceit once more.

The next section of the workbook asked Siddharth to list the values he held dear and how they aligned or conflicted with the values he observed at DeceptiveGlow. He scribbled down words like honesty, integrity, and fairness. These were the principles that had guided him throughout his career, yet they seemed to be constantly under attack in his current environment.

Siddharth spent hours reflecting on his journey at DeceptiveGlow. He thought about the times he had been passed over for promotions because he refused to engage in office politics, and the instances where his ideas were stolen by those more adept at maneuvering through the murky waters of corporate deceit. He felt a growing sense of disillusionment but also a spark of determination.

The workbook then guided him to analyze the political landscape of DeceptiveGlow. He was to identify key players, their motivations, and the unwritten rules that governed their interactions. Siddharth felt a pang of cynicism as he noted down the names of colleagues who thrived on manipulation and those who were mere pawns in the larger game. The exercise was eye-opening, forcing him to confront the harsh realities of his workplace.

However, Siddharth also realized that understanding these dynamics was the first step towards navigating them effectively. The Panchatantra's stories, with their unflinching portrayal of a world rife with deceit and unpredictability, offered valuable lessons. They taught him that while he couldn't control the actions of others, he could control his responses and strategies.

Siddharth began to see parallels between his situation and the tales from the Panchatantra. Just as Sanjivaka had survived against all odds, only to be deceived later, Siddharth knew he had to be vigilant and adaptable. The stories didn't promise justice or ideal outcomes but emphasized the importance of wisdom and strategic thinking in navigating a flawed world.

Armed with these insights, Siddharth started to change his outlook about his work. He understood that while it was important to hold onto his values, he also needed to be pragmatic and strategic. He started to identify allies and build a network of like-minded colleagues who valued integrity. Together, they could create pockets of trust and collaboration within the larger, deceitful environment.

Over the next few weeks, Siddharth began to apply the lessons he had learned. He was more cautious about sharing his ideas and started documenting his contributions meticulously.

He also became more observant, learning to read the undercurrents of office politics without getting swept away by them. He engaged with colleagues strategically, ensuring that he was seen and heard without compromising his principles.

The workbook had a final section that asked Siddharth to set goals for how he would navigate his career moving forward. Siddharth wrote down his aspirations with a renewed sense of clarity. He wanted to rise within DeceptiveGlow, not by playing dirty but by being smarter and more strategic. He pledged to uphold his values while also protecting himself from deceit and manipulation.

Siddharth finished the workbook and felt a sense of accomplishment. The stories of the Panchatantra had offered him a realistic, albeit harsh, perspective on the world of work. They didn't sugarcoat the challenges but instead provided tools to navigate them. Siddharth realized that he didn't have to become deceitful to succeed; he just had to be wiser and more strategic.

In the months that followed, Siddharth's approach started to pay off. He gained a reputation for being both competent and savvy. His projects were recognized, and his ideas were harder to steal because he had learned to protect them. Siddharth felt a renewed sense of purpose and confidence, knowing that he could thrive in DeceptiveGlow without losing himself.

## Hack-2 workbook

