

# THE THREE ABILITIES

**How do we make our lives more meaningful? What abilities do we need? Different people will come up with different answers. The story below presents one perspective of the abilities you need in order to make your life meaningful. Do you agree with it? Read on and find out.**

One day, a village wise man heard that a person from a neighbouring village was coming to visit him. The visitor was coming to enquire about a rumour he'd heard regarding the three abilities. He was said to be a greedy man who always wanted more than everyone else; so, after hearing about the three abilities that hold the secret to a meaningful life, he decided that he must acquire them for himself.

While travelling to see the wise man, the visitor's mind wandered to thoughts of what the three abilities might be. Maybe, he thought, one would be the ability to rule over mankind. Or maybe, one is the ability to change the world. Could it be, he thought, the ability to win the praises of his fellow villagers? He could hardly contain his excitement; how great and mighty he felt he would be, if only those were the abilities.

The visitor finally gained audience with the wise man and eagerly asked, "Is it true that there are three abilities that hold the secret to a meaningful life? And, if so, how can I acquire them?"

The wise man gazed thoughtfully at the eager visitor for a moment and then responded, "Yes, these three abilities do exist ... and they are meaningful only to people of greatness."

The visitor assured the wise man, "Oh yes, I am a man of true greatness. The three abilities will not be wasted by sharing them with me."



Leaning towards the visitor with narrowed eyes, the wise man uttered, "Then you must pay very close attention; for these abilities are greater than all others in their capacity to influence humanity." The greedy visitor nodded in anticipation.

"The first of these great abilities is the ability to rule over man; the man is yourself, and the ability is responsibility. The second is the ability to be answerable and liable for the changes over man; again, the man is yourself, and the ability is accountability. The third of these abilities is the ability to win the praise of your fellow villagers because you are believable when you speak; this ability is credibility."

The visitor sat back, mumbling to himself, "Responsibility, accountability, credibility..." As the realisation of the message sunk in, he jumped to his feet and exclaimed, "This isn't what I expected at all! You're not giving me something I can acquire; these are things I'd have to do all the time! Who on earth would have the stomach for such tasks?" With that, he turned on his heels with a huff and strode home.

The wise man smiled to himself and said, "Men of greatness have the stomach for they are those with the capability to exercise the three abilities."

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