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The secret of success

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On 12 April, 1983, an Indian soldier, Barber Kailash Chand, 29, was returning to Jodhpur via train with some other jawans from Pune. The 5 Down Ahmedabad-Agra Fort Express, in which they were travelling, was moving at full speed between Jawali and Somesar stations. Barber Kailash Chand was standing near a window when he saw a jawan of the Ordnance Corps falling out of the open door of the next compartment. Momentarily stunned, Kailash Chand lost no time in pulling the chain to bring the train to a halt; but the system was inoperative, as the train continued to speed along.

Kailash Chand then decided that something else would have to be done. With utter disregard for his own safety, he rushed out of the compartment and grasping the safety bars of the train, inched his way towards the guards van. With flailing legs, the paratrooper finally managed to reach the compartment after about ten agonizing minutes. The guard brought the train to a halt, but it was for the soldier to convince the engine driver that he should reverse the train six kilometres to pick up the wounded soldier who had fallen out of the door.

Narrating the sequence of events, he said that while inching his way towards the guard's van, he had been thinking only of the soldier who had fallen out of the train; he had not thought about his own safety. All he wanted to do was to stop the train somehow, so that the soldier could be saved.

So it is with any purpose in life. To succeed, one must do what Kailash Chand did with such success: one must lose oneself, for only then will one be able to find one's true self. Self-fulfillment does not lie in making oneself secure in life, though that is where most people seek it; it lies in putting aside all thoughts of one's own safety, and relentlessly pursuing one's goal.