

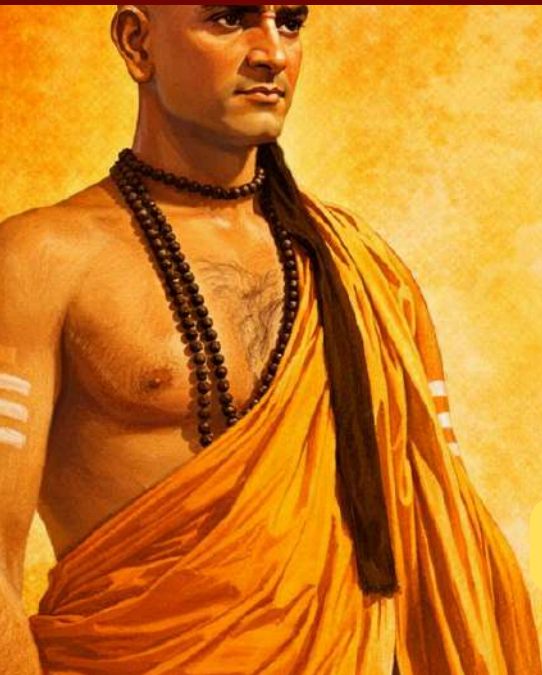
Vision: What future we want to create? To be known as the best B-School for aspiring management leaders in the country with an industry-focused curriculum and practice.

Mission: Why we exist? To create value for students, business and society by providing intellectual leadership, advancing the science and practice of management, and developing confident leaders to be the agents of change in a world driven by data, technology and innovation.

STARTUP SPARK

YOUR FORTNIGHTLY GUIDE TO INDIA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL NEWS

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chanakya neeti

Strategy, Power & Entrepreneurship: Lessons from Chanakya

Why Chanakya, Why Now?

In a world of AI, venture capital, and hyper-growth startups, it may seem unusual to turn to a **thinker from over two millennia ago**.

And yet, perhaps this is exactly the moment to do so.

Chanakya was not an entrepreneur in the modern sense. He did not build a startup, raise capital, or scale a product. But he did something far more fundamental. He built and advised systems of power, strategy, and long-term thinking.

As the chief advisor to Chandragupta Maurya, he helped lay the foundation of one of India's greatest empires. His works, the Arthashastra and Chanakya Niti, are not just texts on governance; they are playbooks on decision-making, resource allocation, risk, and human behaviour.

In many ways, that is exactly what entrepreneurship is. Strip away the jargon, and a startup is simply this: making decisions under uncertainty, with limited resources, against stronger competition.

That was Chanakya's world.

Today's founders operate in markets instead of kingdoms, pitch decks instead of royal courts, and competition instead of conquest. But the underlying challenges remain remarkably similar:

·Whom do you trust? ·When do you act? ·How do you allocate scarce resources? ·How do you outthink stronger rivals?

Chanakya's thinking was not idealistic. It was pragmatic, sometimes uncomfortable, and always strategic.

Which is perhaps why it still resonates. This edition of Startup Spark explores five timeless lessons from Chanakya Niti, reframed for the modern entrepreneur.

Because while tools change, the nature of strategy does not.



5 Entrepreneurial Lessons from Chanakya Niti

1. Before You Start, Ask Three Questions

Chanakya advised: Before beginning any task, ask yourself—

Why am I doing this? What are the results? Will I succeed?

For entrepreneurs, this translates into clarity before action. Too many startups begin with excitement but lack direction. Founders rush into building without deeply understanding:

- The problem
- The market
- The outcome they seek

The best founders are not the fastest movers. They are the clearest thinkers. Before you build:

- Why does this problem matter?
- What does success look like?
- What will it take to get there?

Clarity is a competitive advantage.

2. Don't Reveal Everything

Chanakya strongly believed in strategic discretion.

Not every plan needs to be shared. Not every move needs to be announced. In today's world of constant posting and pitching, this is counterintuitive. But important.

Entrepreneurs often:

- Over-share ideas too early
- Seek validation before building
- Confuse visibility with progress

Execution matters more than announcement. This doesn't mean secrecy; it means timing and judgment.

Build quietly. Reveal strategically. Let results speak louder than intent.

3. Choose People Carefully

Chanakya placed immense emphasis on alliances and trust. Empires and startups are built on people. For founders, this shows up in:

- Co-founder choices
- Early hires
- Advisors and investors

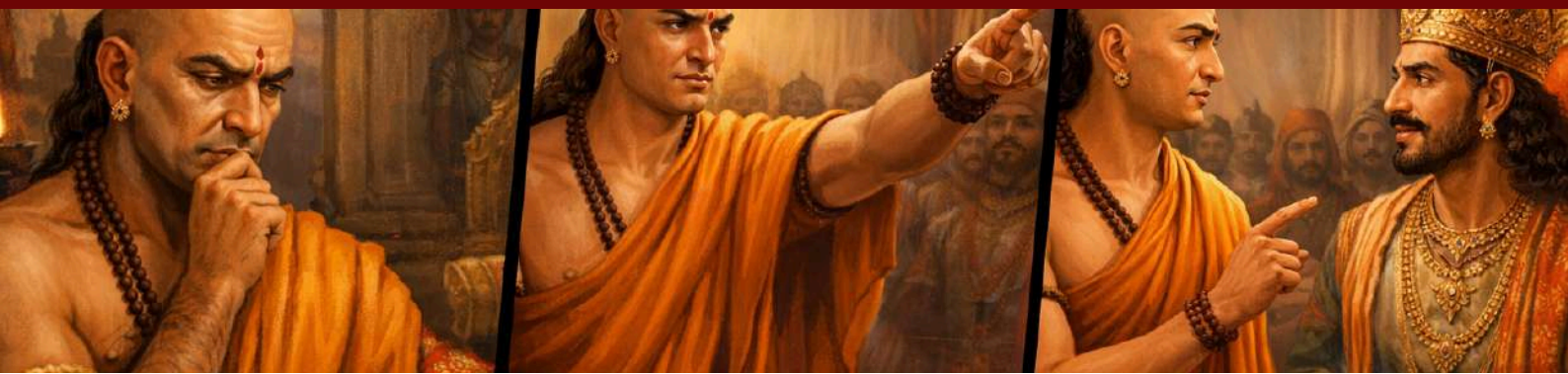
A weak product can be fixed. A weak team is far harder to recover from.

Ask:

- Do they share the same values?
- Can they handle uncertainty?
- Do they complement your strengths?

Startups don't fail because of a lack of ideas. They fail because of misaligned people.

**Click on underlined word to read the full article! Our newsletter compiles insights from diverse web sources, offering a comprehensive view of the startup ecosystem.*



4. Learn from Failure, But Don't Dwell on It

Chanakya viewed setbacks as part of strategy, not the end of it. For entrepreneurs, failure is inevitable:

- A feature doesn't work
- A pitch doesn't land
- A market doesn't respond

The difference lies in response. Unsuccessful founders ask: Why did this happen to me?

Successful founders ask: What does this teach me? Speed of learning > fear of failure.

The goal is not to avoid mistakes. The goal is to learn faster than others.

5. Be Fearless When the Time is Right

Chanakya believed that once you have assessed, planned, and prepared, you must act decisively.

Hesitation kills momentum.

In startups, timing is everything:

- Launch too early, and you fail unprepared
- Wait too long, and you miss the market

There comes a moment when analysis must give way to action.

Great founders recognise that moment.

They move:

- When the product is "good enough"
- When the opportunity is visible
- When the risk is calculated

Courage is not the absence of fear. It is an action despite it.

The Larger Insight

Chanakya's lessons may seem simple. But they are not easy.

They require:

- Discipline over impulse
- Strategy over noise
- Patience over urgency

In a world obsessed with speed, his thinking reminds us of something critical:

Entrepreneurship is not just about building fast. It is about thinking right.

Closing Note

More than 2,000 years ago, Chanakya helped build an empire with limited resources, uncertain conditions, and powerful adversaries.

Today, the context has changed. The principles have not. The tools you use may be modern. But the mindset you need is timeless. The question, then, is not whether Chanakya is relevant.

The question is: Are we willing to think as deeply as he did?

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