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**Controllable Destiny ... Setting a Destination and Experiencing the Ride**

**By Edward B. Toupin**

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**Toupin**

The many ideas of "living life" are the most indistinctly defined conundrums that a human being can ponder. Philosophy has its own definitions of life and living. Of course, so do religions, corporations, politicians, and every diverse group on the planet. Some of the looser definitions I hear from many people include:

- Life is ruled by destiny.
- Life is ruled by fate.
- We all live by a Universal Plan.
- Only God knows.

In general, many people believe that their lives are already set and that they should accept the paths and destinations placed before them. But, the few that believe that life is what you make of it are the ones that understand that there is no absolute definition for life and living.

---- Belief Systems ----

In every case, you identify paths in your life based on your own personal "belief system." This system is who you are and what makes you do the things you do. It is your conscience, your ego, your little devil ... you! Everything you do in life is based on at least one of your core beliefs. But, when you do step outside of that lifelong foundation, you may feel frightened, uncomfortable, and generally lost.

I do believe in a God, a greater existence above us all, but life has taught me that there are no controlling entities that have absolute plans laid out

for each of us. I would have to say that one's direction is chosen by none, and by all. Our destinies are not chosen at birth, but are poured into us as we grow and every action we take affects others as much as the actions of others affect us.

We choose our destination in life based on our beliefs. We feel as though our destinations are predetermined because we know what we "must" do to satisfy those beliefs. When we grow to reach the boundaries of that belief system, we become dissatisfied because we can see where we want to go, but can't get there with our current beliefs. It is at that time that we must decide to either take the leap into the unknown, or stay where we are because it is safe and known.

---- Destiny vs. Destination ----

Destiny, by definition, is the idea of "what may happen in the future." For most, it is the acceptance that we have a predetermined destiny and we should not fight the path on which we are placed. Destination, by definition, is the act of "aiming for a certain position; a place." For some, a destination is the ultimate place that we want to be at the end of a given journey---a chosen place at the end of a path.

The idea of allowing destiny to choose your direction in life is the easiest way to live. It guarantees that you will encounter little resistance and be able to live a constant life from beginning to end. You merely experience the day-to-day problems of living an existence.

However, destiny is only the idea of what "may" happen in the future. It is not a set future, but one that you choose to accept as an absolute. Accepting destiny usually occurs when one either does not know how to choose a destination in their life or when one is so overwhelmed by their life that they don't have time, or are afraid, to choose.

To move forward, one must pick a destination, and work to get there. This is not an easy task as our own beliefs, disbeliefs, overwhelming situations, and lack of understanding cloud us all. It is not the abandonment of a belief system, it is the enhancement of our existing system through growth and knowledge that brings about change. We must first clear ourselves and understand our blocks and our goals so that we can view a better picture of what we can do for ourselves.

---- Choosing a Destination ----

To choose a destination, you must know what you want. Many times, people select their paths based on their current state and beliefs in their lives.

This tends to push them right back into the same, or similar, situations that they are in at the time they decide to make a change. This usually occurs out of fear of looking outside of their "comfort zones" and environment.

Comfort zones are unusual places in which to exist. Such zones can create apathy and lethargy and keep one from moving beyond current situations. The lack of movement is because the person has become comfortable with a particular situation in their life and is able to, somewhat, control the situation. Even if the situation is torturous and stressful, it is familiar, and if the person feels control or comfort, they will resist change and stay there.

It is important that, when trying to determine a destination, you think of the things that are important to you, overall. Not just now, but in the "long run" of your life. Ask yourself such questions as:

- Where do I want to be?
- What do I want to do?
- What is important to me?

In the days of the wagon trains, "ruts" were created in the ground by continual traffic over one path. In life, a rut is caused by continual travel between the same places in your existence. In examining the questions in detail, you can eventually define a destination outside of your current situation and break out of any ruts that might keep you moving along the same paths.

---- Headin' Down the Highway ----

Once you go through the process of picking a destination, you have to head in the general direction to reach that destination. It's like driving down a highway. If you're driving down I-10 West, you have a choice to make. Do you go to Las Vegas or Los Angeles? If the chosen destination is Las Vegas, take the I-40 exit then head North on various highways. If you choose Los Angeles, take I-10 all the way in through Needles. The point is, you chose the destination, but along that path, you will experience different terrain, decisions, and changes before you reach that destination.

In some cases, the path is treacherous, hot, and muggy and you twinge at the expectation that the destination will be a living hell, when in fact, the destination is an oasis of more than you could have ever hoped. In other cases, the path is easy, yet the destination is a wild, hot, and crowded place that may not meet your expectations. Whatever the assumed outcome, make changes to accommodate yourself, but stay the course.

## Controllable Destiny ... Setting a Destination and Experiencing the Ride

Realize that once you pick a destination in life, you will have to figure out how to get there. Every destination has a different path with different "obstacles." These obstacles, however, are helpful "classes" in preparing you for your ultimate destination. You can plan for some of these classes by simply examining what it will take to reach your destination. You must set your goals, vision, and mission before you can understand the challenges that must be overcome to reach your ultimate destination. It's sometimes a difficult task, but it can be done.

---- Pie in the Sky ----

I remember being told so many times that my vision of my life was "pie in the sky." I never cared, and kept on plodding----into failure. But, it wasn't until I began to manage my expectations that I was able to reach my lofty destinations with success. Picking a destination that is far beyond your immediate reach can lead to disappointment and frustration. Failure leads to more failure and eventually, complete surrender.

I'm not telling you to give up on your lofty goals, I'm telling you to slow down and take a good look at where you're going. You must learn how to

break your dreams into smaller pieces. Take only pieces of the pie instead of the whole thing at one time. If you conquer one piece, you're that much closer to your ultimate vision. Conquer one piece at a time and learn as you go. It not only makes you smarter and stronger, but it will also give you a better chance of conquering the next leg of your journey to reach that, originally, lofty goal.

---- What's next? ----

We do have a controllable destiny, but we have to learn what it is that is keeping us from satisfying our desires and reaching our chosen destination. This destination must be earned by researching the path it takes to get you there. This is where you must come to understand your belief system and how to make it grow to accommodate your goals.

So many people allow apathy to control their lives. They wait for their destinies to come to them. In some cases, they call it "allowing God to guide" them when, in fact, "He" is within us all allowing us to choose and move in whichever direction we desire. If you still feel like God and the Universe has a plan for your life, and you really don't want to try to step out of your situation to move toward a better life, just remember:

"God helps those who help themselves."

Edward B. Toupin is a writer and Life Coach living in the Entertainment Capital of the World. He works with individuals to help them realize their potential and establish the directions that will bring them the most fulfillment.

## **It's The Ride That Counts**

**By Selena Richardson**

Having goals is a good thing. It means that you're willing to take the first step to achieving those goals. When you write down your goals, articulate them on paper, that's the first step to achieving them.

But what about the second step, the third and the fourth and so on? If you persevere and keep focused you will eventually reach the goals that you set for yourself. But when you finally reach that goal, how will you feel about it?

Will it be a sense of accomplishment and pride? Or will it be more of 'yeah I finally got it done' and you're just happy that you've gotten it over with?

The route you take while pursuing your goal determines how you feel about it at the end. It's the ride that counts. Have you been on a road trip where everything that could go wrong did? How did you feel when you finally got to your destination? Pretty worn out, huh? Now what about a good road trip where everything went smoothly? You were probably still tired depending on how long the trip was but you were a bit happier when you got there.

See, it's how you get there that counts. If you're miserable during the entire trip, you're going to be miserable when you get to where you're going. I've had too many road trips where everyone in the car was cranky during the entire ride and as soon as we got to our last stop, the crankiness only continued on. Sure we were glad to get there but only because we were finally there and able to get out of the car. We were just glad the trip was over and still quite a bit cranky too.

But when the road trip is smooth and fun with no accidents or construction or any mishaps, not only are you happy during the ride but you're ecstatic when you get to your final stop. You're not as tired and worn out as you would have been if it were a bad trip.

It's the same thing with your goals. You're more appreciative of achieving your goals if you have fun with it while you're working on it. So enjoy the ride, have fun and there will be a lot more satisfaction when you reach your goals.

Selena Richardson believes in following your dreams and creating the life you want. To receive more articles like this and a free ebook, subscribe to Creative Possibilities by sending a blank email to

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It's The Ride That Counts

A Word Fitly Spoken ~ Destiny

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