

Fate will win out over choice in our lives

by Mark Pavilons

At some point in our lives, we will relinquish ourselves to fate.

That which must be.

It often brings us things we never asked for, and don't particularly like.

Many believe we can't fight it, and fate will always find a way. Some say it's 'meant to be.'

Was I the product of chance, a being that was fated to be for no rhyme or reason?

Or was I meant to be, in the sense that I was preordained by some spiritual agency to come into existence?

One view of life is that everything happens by chance. I'm lucky to be alive, given the astronomical odds of coming into being. Yet I'm mortal, subject to the whims of the forces of nature. I'm reminded of this each and every day.

In my current journey with cancer, it seems like we're always chasing cancer's tail. It's like putting out spot fires every time one erupts, and then moving on.

My latest scans warrant an MRI and then likely radiation treatments. Not the news I wanted to hear, but I'm somewhat resigned to the fact my life now revolves around blood work, scans, treatment, and repeat.

I knew this from the day I was told my prostate cancer had metastasized. The key was to keep PSA as low as possible, and try to stall the progression of cancer - stop it in its tracks.

It can't be defeated, but anything that hinders its spread offers more time - more time to live, more time to discover more treatment options.

Even after my journey thus far, I still don't feel like a 'cancer patient.'

Sure, I accept it, understand it and work around it. At this point, fate, and the recommendations of learned physicians, make up my journey moving forward.

I have no choice in the matter.

I have asked for strength - physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, along the way. But really, all the positive energy, prayer, healing vibrations and supplements are not enough.

Christians view that God not only rules the world but is intimately involved with everything that transpires. In this sense, destiny replaces fate.

According to Meade's book, 'Fate and Destiny: The Two Agreements of the Soul,' he writes: 'What I am calling fate has to do with the way a person's soul is seeded and shaped from within, like a story trying to unfold and become known. What I am calling destiny has to do with the inner arc and arrow of one's life. For each soul is secretly aimed at the world and inclined toward a destination that only becomes revealed in crucial moments and at turning points in life. The elements of fate and destiny are intimations of the story our soul would have us live, both the limitations that must be faced and the destination that would be found. As fate would have it,

they are often found through what seems like a big mistake, a strange accident or a surprise.?

He admits that fate involves ?earthly limitations, but destiny on the other hand, says we are ?of the stars.?

?When it comes to life, we spin our own yarn, and where we end up is really, in fact, where we always intended to be,? said Julia Glass, in ?Three Junes.?

It would seem, fellow humans, that fate doesn't really care about us. And, if it does manage a response to ?why me??it would likely be ?why not??

So, my dilemma is given the tug-of-war between fate and destiny, where does choice enter the equation? Our Creator, and even the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, give us freedom of choice. So why can't we exercise it in all circumstances?

Some higher thinkers would smile that smug smile and say, ?You do, Mark, you do.?

Every decision, turn, journey, diagnosis and treatment are all part of my fateful destiny. They were all meant to be part of my personal adventure.

But why? What purpose does such a struggle, and premature end, serve?

We do not know. Again, may it's supposed to be that way.

But I can't help but think there's more I?can do, more buttons to push, switches to flip and monkey wrenches to toss into the mix. Why can't I muck things up, and turn the tide in my favour?

Why don't I possess the power of fellow creatures that can regrow limbs and even organs? That would definitely come in handy for all of us. Why are lizards and axolotls so blessed?

They know nothing of God, the Big Bang, the universe and spirituality. They likely don't dwell on their own mortality and what waits beyond. And yet, what power they possess.

Sharks cannot contract cancer and that mystery still plagues humankind. Our fellow beings have taken to eating shark cartilage in an effort to mimic such superpowers, all to no avail.

And dolphins ? who some argue are smarter than humans ? won't give up any secrets either.

Come on guys, share!

I think one of our species' downfalls is the perception of time.?We know when it grows late, and the lights dim. We feel when the final sunsets are near. Some are even given their ?end date? by various physicians and specialists.

And then we wait, powerless, hoping for a miracle. Some would definitely barter with the Devil himself if it meant more time. Can you ?cheat? Death ? that cloaked, scythe-yielding Grim Reaper?

Marcus Aurelius believed that by accepting our fate, we can cultivate a deeper sense of peace and contentment.

I'm trying, but those are still at arm's length. I?do avoid conflict and stress and ?go with the flow.?' It's all I can do.

?You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control the way you think about all the events. You always have a choice. You can choose to face them with a positive mental attitude,? wrote Roy T. Bennett, in ?The Light in the Heart.?

But in the end, who's prepared for what fate and destiny throw at us, like a major league fastball?

I agree with Sean O'Casey when he observed: "All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed."

My friends, until the final curtain draws, face fate and destiny with strength.