

When life errors in your favour.

By Simon Pelletier

Truth and Reconciliation Day has got me thinking about the randomness of life.

I see my life as a collection of dice rolls. Some rolls land on enjoyable things, other rolls present suffering. I'll give you an example.

When my parents decided to move to Winnipeg right after I graduated high school, I felt like I had no choice in the matter. That I had to come to Manitoba. And when I showed up here I was depressed. It wasn't nearly as beautiful as the small town on Vancouver Island I went to school. It was a big city. I had lost all my close friends. It was cold. This was a bad dice throw. But now, 15 years later, I consider Winnipeg, and Manitoba, to be gems, hidden away, unseen by most, but if revealed, they shine.

There are two types of errors then. One is when something changes incorrectly but you benefit. Think of a refund you didn't return. A twenty dollar bill on the side of the road. A free lunch. The other error is one that presents suffering. Your partner dies in a car crash or you develop multiple sclerosis. Some the suffering we do in life can bring great joy and contentment later. Child rearing is an example of this. As is moving cities, jobs, social circles. They are investments.

Freewill is an interesting pairing with this idea of randomness. Where does my desire to reach out and love those around me come from? I do this by smiling and offering myself to my friends and family. This desire is intrinsic to me and I offer myself up without hesitation. I'm not scared of rejection because I'm usually received with open arms. Without me considering my intentions these actions of love lead to a deep and interconnected community of people that make me feel at home here in Manitoba. And mostly I see this as happenstance. It's not a considered thing on my part. I just act in the ways I want and community builds up around me.

Compare that to someone who doesn't treat others well. Who is very inward focused and doesn't extend themselves out. That kind of behaviour won't grow a collection of loving friends and family around them. Their set of desires leads to alienation and loneliness.

My point here is that it's random that my desires tend toward community and this other person towards isolation. A random roll in personality and behaviour that lead me to nice

outcomes and my counterpart to suffering.

There is no squaring this kind of thing up. It's simply random that I'm on a path that bears fruit and they aren't. That doesn't mean things can't change but it does show you how random life is. This doesn't even include parts of life that are unchangeable. I.e, broken necks, giant highways, historical grievances.

To finish out this stream of thought I present a great strategy to life errors. If you roll and it comes up big then you can immediately benefit. Make your changes, enjoy that moment. And if the roll comes up bad. If life gives you lemons you can simply decide that it is teaching you something. That by suffering you will come to appreciate a part of life you had never looked at before. Or perhaps it will galvanize a positive change in an effort to avoid suffering in the future.

This simple framing will work for most.

For those who've only had trauma and pain I think it won't be a proper solution. But to be frank I don't have enough perspective on that to share insight.