

Column #1

I couldn't sleep last night. I was up into the wee hours of the morning pondering life's little questions, or, in the case of this insomniac, life's Big Ones. I couldn't help but think about the difference between fate and free will, coincidence verses predetermination. How do our decisions factor into our lives? Fate and free will must be inexplicably intertwined, right? Furthermore, can you believe in one if you don't believe in the other?

Most people use fate and predetermination to attribute to the circumstances that most of us cannot explain. If we use fate to replace obligation, when do we stand corrected? It certainly isn't impossible to commit a crime and blame fate ("it makes no difference what I do, I was predestined to do it anyway"), but you're still going to have to submit to the consequences. We cannot assume that it was a "wrong place, wrong time" situation because it is our choices in life that lead us to lucky or unlucky circumstances. It might be fate that we are born into a poor family, but it is our free will that determines whether or not we'll stay there. That statement leads to the thought that Fate is concerned with what we cannot control (when we are born, to whom, our social class), and Free Will concerns our decisions to "change our fate."

Fate and free will are separate entities, but they are definitely connected. You cannot have one without the other, but we'll never figure out the exact relationship between the two. Fate, or faith, is accepting the fact that we won't always be right, we might fall on "lucky" or "unlucky" times, but we will always have the free will to do what we *think* is right.

Ultimately, life is a series of decisions that shapes the rest of our lives. To call it 'fate' is a personal preference. Be wary, however, of using the title of 'fate' as a clutch to detach yourself from the responsibility of decision. That being said (well, written), it only makes sense to live your life to the fullest- always trying, always reaching, willing to accept defeats and learn from them- how else can you determine your fate if you don't create it yourself?

Maybe life is all fate. Maybe it's free will. Maybe we'll never know.