

# Advocating Fate: why I believe in it

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By Mari Garcia

Fate and Free Will as they are inseparable for if you consider one you must, by necessity consider the other.

The Concise Oxford gives us the definitions of Fate and Free Will as follows:

**Fate** – *what is destined to happen; appointed lot of a person, etc;*

**Free Will** – *power of directing our own actions without constraint by necessity or fate*

As an astrologer, fate is the basis of my work. I am often asked, how as a person living in a Western society I reconcile the issue of fate with the dominant belief in the exercise of free will.

If we consider Fate as that which has been allotted, every single person in this room as well as every single organism has a fate. We all collectively, as well as individually, have been allotted our own ounce of fate. Simply, as a human being there are certain aspects of my makeup (and yours) which are fated, for example, not to be able to see in the dark, or sprout wings and fly. My fate, at one level is in the species I belong to.

On the individual level, I am fated by the genes I have inherited which predispose me to certain hair and eye colour, skin pigmentation as well as height and body shape.

However, with the exercise of free will, I may choose at some point to choose to change my hair colour or my height, by wearing heels. I can only change these temporarily though. What about plastic surgery, you say? Yes, of course, one can use that but what we change is the appearance and no matter how much free will I exert I will not inherently change the composition or the essence of my disposition to brown hair.

It is a given that the Sun rises in the east, that night follows day and that the Moon waxes and wanes. It is this sense of order that dominates the natural world of which we are part. This is the fate that is part and parcel of being part of the physical/material plane. It is natural law. It has certain parameters within which we must operate.

It is our fate, as humans to be the most highly developed species and as such we have a great responsibility to realise that fate on a collective level.

On an individual level, each one of us is fated to be exactly who and what we are. An astrological chart is the map of an individual's potential as well as their preconceived expectations of life -- the individual's biases as determined by their time and place of birth.

To quote Jung: *"We are the sum total of the time and place we are born in."*

Therefore, a person born in 18<sup>th</sup> century Paris will have different expectations and biases to another born in the same place two centuries later. For the purpose of existence is to not merely act out those biases blindly but to develop consciousness and expand on the inherent potential. The exercise of the will to realise this potential and to work with what each has is indeed **free will**.

In our world of choice-cantered individualism we are encouraged to **"be what we want to be"**. We are told we can be anything we want to be as long as we are positive and open. What is the inherently flawed thought behind this is that we forget to take into account that the biases that are inbuilt in all of us will predispose us to certain aspects of life. It is the realisation that each of us has an individual destiny that makes the exercise of free will much more potent.

### **Understanding one's fate is the key to making the most of your free will.**

For most, fate is defined as something that is imposed from without – something which compels us to do something or something which constrains us. It is often perceived as happening **TO US**.

Free will, on the other hand, is seen as that which allows us to do what we want rather than that which compels us.

Indeed, often the compulsion we label as fate comes from within us rather than from external sources. We may perceive it as external if we project it onto others. Constantly battling what we are and wanting to be something else may be what we believe is exercising free will but we may experience its effects as the **'heavy hand of fate'**.

Take the example of a person who has good analytical skills but who is led to believe that there is more 'merit' in service delivery rather than policy development. This person then dedicates their life to caring for others but always there is a sense that fate conspires and they meet obstacles, feel constantly threatened and must struggle to survive. Fate (that word again!) steps in and they are made redundant. In order to maintain some sanity, they take on contract work which puts their analytical skills to use in a more direct manner. Suddenly, this person starts to experience fate in a much more positive way. They are working **with** rather than **against** what they are. They begin to realise their **destiny**.

If we go about life in a state of ignorance of what our fate is, if we deny our destiny and experience it as compulsion and constraint, then life is indeed bitter and miserable.

We have all heard this story and perhaps have also experienced it. I see and hear it all the time both in the consulting room and in the classroom.

For, if we perceive fate as that which is, and seek knowledge and understanding of it then, free will is much more potent as it enables us to do with what has been given and be at peace with what is. **Happiness then is doing what we are meant to be doing – living our FATE.**

As an astrologer, I work with cycles and their expression in the individual's life. The cycles of the heavens symbolise the macrocosm and their movement is indeed fated. Saturn has a 29.5 year cycle while the Earth takes 365 \_ days to revolve around the Sun. No matter what, an individual will experience the Moon waxing and waning as well as the Sun rising in the east and setting and setting in the west. No exertion of free will to date (as far as I am aware of) has or can change these facts.

What astrology provides is a map that describes the individual's life plan and its potential as well as preconceived expectations. This is their fate. The unfoldment of this potential via the development of individual consciousness and awareness of the inherent biases occurs as the individual exercises their free will. Acknowledging and working with what is given helps the individual realize and expand their potential.

Therefore, Fate is an integral part of what I do. It does not 'make' people do things or deprive them of choice. I often hear the criticism --

*"what's the point of living if you know what is going to happen?"*

Fate is not about knowing what is going to happen but rather the sense of knowing what has been allotted. Jung used the term individuation as the person's realization of their individual consciousness. It is accepting and understanding of one's **fate** or what one is allotted and working with it to make real what is promised.

The Greeks had some wonderful terms for fate depending on what aspect of it you were experiencing:

**Heiarmene** which can be loosely translated as that which has already been allotted. We all experience this through natural law. The cycles of the heavens, genetic make-up, etc.

**Anangke** and **Agnoia** - the first means constraint and the second means ignorance. If we proceed from that which is allotted **heimarmene** with little or no understanding, in a state of ignorance **agnoia**, then we experience **anangke**, constraint. Life is determined and fated and we are prisoners of our fate, constantly battling that which has been allotted. This makes for an awfully bitter existence.

On the other hand, if a person seeks to know and understand the **heimarmene** that which has been allotted, through **gnosis** knowledge/wisdom then the experience of fate is as **pronoia – perfectly and consciously at ease with what and who you are.**

In closing, fate is a much maligned but if we know our fate then the outcome is far healthier as we work with our natures rather than in conflict and against it. For we are part of an ordered universe which revels in chaos. Both are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary just as fate and free will are to one another.

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