Never Travel in a Straight Line

Self-Leadership Strategies to Discover Life's Purpose and Live Passions

Rerouting Life's Diversions

"Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times i fell down and got back up again."

- Nelson Mandela

MY STORY

Have you ever found yourself unexpectedly diverted?

I have. Literally.

On a flight to Paris from the United States, we were forced to land in Gander, Newfoundland. It was foggy. The airport was empty. The airline offered us nothing but awkward apologies and bad coffee. And there I was, rerouted—off track, out of sync, and nowhere near where I was supposed to be.

But here's the thing: that unexpected stopover became a story I still tell. I met strangers I'll never forget. I learned the subtle art of surrendering to what I cannot control. And I discovered that sometimes, being rerouted is exactly where the journey begins.

Another time, I found myself at a train station in Florence. I missed my train by five minutes. My carefully planned day unraveled, but in its place came a spontaneous afternoon of wandering the streets, stumbling into a courtyard concert, and laughing with a couple from Argentina over wine I never planned to drink. No itinerary could have offered me that.

And it made me wonder how many times in life I've resisted the detours, thinking they were delays, when in fact they were the main event.

And maybe that's the whole point of being thrown off course—not to find your way back to the map, but to finally stop living by one.

It took me a while to understand this. I used to think detours were disruptions.

Now, I see them as invitations.

In those moments, I wasn't just traveling—I was learning to live in the unscripted space between expectations and reality.

And it made me wonder how many times in life I've resisted the detours, thinking they were delays, when in fact they were the main event. I had mapped out a route, expected clean transfers and timely arrivals—but the most meaningful moments came when I let go of the plan.

Gander reminded me that even the most grounded flights can deliver you somewhere unexpected and beautiful. Florence taught me that missing one train could mean catching something far more memorable.

When we surrender to the diversion, we give life permission to surprise us.

I started to realize that many of my biggest transformations—both personal and professional—didn't come from sticking to a plan. They came from falling off the map. A job loss, a canceled trip, a love story that didn't unfold the way I'd hoped. At first, each felt like a setback. But with time and distance, I could see they were just… reroutes.

The unexpected isn't always kind. It's often inconvenient. But it's almost always rich.

That's the strange gift of detours. They don't just change your direction. They change your definition of progress. You stop asking, "How fast can I get there?" and start asking, "What am I learning here?"

REFLECTION PROMPT

Think of a time when life diverted you from your carefully laid plans.

What did you discover in the unexpected?

What might it have been preparing you for?

Sometimes, life isn't rerouting you.
It's reintroducing you—to yourself.

WHAT I LEARNED

Life rarely moves in a straight line. Whether you're grounded in Gander or emotionally off-course, it's easy to think you're stuck or failing. But rerouting isn't failure—it's an invitation.

I learned that diversions can be divine. They force us to slow down, to pay attention, to connect with people and places we would've otherwise rushed past. They show us how resourceful, resilient, and open-hearted we can be when the plan changes.

I also learned that some of the best parts of ourselves emerge when we're not sure what to do next. That uncertainty? It's not a void—it's a canvas.

Detours sharpen your instincts. They test your patience. They remind you that your path doesn't have to look like anyone else's to be worthy.

CALL TO ACTION

Life is not a straight line—nor should your journey be.

The next time you're thrown off course, pause before resisting. Let yourself wander. Strike up a conversation with someone unexpected. Order something new. Miss the train, and see what finds you instead.

Because every detour is a doorway. The only question is whether you'll walk through it.

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