



# Why your Life Destination matters more than your Life Direction

by Brian McAleer



## *Why we look for life direction*

I'm sure you've been asked this question before;

*"What are you going to do with your life?"*

It usually hits you during high school or the mid to late teen years, when your teachers and parents expect you to decide what career you will follow for the rest of your life. And doesn't that question drive you mad? How are we supposed to know at 18, 16 or even 14 what we're going to do with the rest of our lives? Choosing one destination can be overwhelming, so we tend to follow more of a direction instead.

And if you are currently or have been in Year's 11 and 12, or around the age 16-18, you could have made that decision already. If you were guided in the best way, you would have made that decision yourself, and been happy with what you chose. But if the pressure to decide was strong, you opted for the first or most common choice, or picked from one of three options presented to you, perhaps you're not so happy with that decision.

It's very unreasonable to place that pressure on teens and young adults. Even some forty-year old's still haven't decided, but have rather chosen a path of trying out different things until they find what works.

And as much as choosing a life direction is associated with career in today's world, what's left

out of that conversation and decision-making process is what it's *really* about. It's not so much about the 9 to 5 job you will hold, but rather what is your purpose, and what is the meaning you are searching for. That's more important than any career path. Any job or industry has established its purpose and has meaning, i.e. the marketing industry has a purpose of selling products or services to customers, and its search for meaning is knowing what their customers want and giving it to them.

Treating yourself like you were a company that develops a purpose and meaning that gives way to a mission statement, is what figuring out what your purpose and search for meaning are all about.

And how, you might be asking? The way in which you do that doesn't matter so much, so first let's talk about the difference between direction and destination.

## ***The Difference between Direction and Destination***



You don't often hear someone say, "You need more of a life destination" do you? No, it's usually, "You need to figure out your life's direction". But can I be perhaps a little controversial here and say, your life direction doesn't matter as much as your destination? I'll explain.

A destination in life is about a place, a point of arrival and reaching an outcome of some kind. Think about when you go travelling. Your whole trip is dreamed of and planned around visiting a destination. You pick that from one of many, and you list all the things you want to see, do and experience while there. But do you try to reinvent how you get there? If you know the easiest way to travel halfway around the world is to fly there, why would you go any other way? You could catch a boat, but do you want to invest weeks or even months doing that? And if you're creative, you could even drive to the other side of the world, granted you have a car that runs well, and can cross bodies of water by bridge or ship, then it's possible.

But when you're focused on the destination, you don't worry about the direction. You don't argue with the airline on which way they fly overseas, you just accept it, pay your fare and hop on the plane. We do this because we know they'll get us there, and we don't have to do anything other than enjoy the ride.

How does this apply to your life?

If you spend time really thinking about where you are headed in life, getting clearer and more certain about it over time, then naturally you would want the quickest, smoothest and easiest way of getting there right? Once you know exactly where you are headed, you get excited and motivated to get there because you know it will pay off and reward you in many ways. And realising that there is always

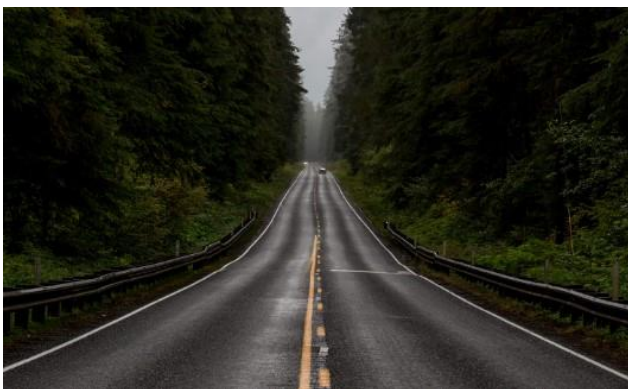
more than one way to any destination in life, would you be totally focused on just one way of getting there, or would you consider them all?

Now let's talk about direction, then we can compare the two so you can see why choosing a life destination is ultimately more important than choosing a life direction.

Direction is how you get to where you're going. It's a pathway, a life-road, an avenue and a journey of sorts. It can be long or short, dark or light, smooth or bumpy, and just as the roads we travel down can fit those descriptions, so too can our roads in life. And therein lies the problem.

Society and history have led us to believe that you have to take the longest, hardest, most difficult or perhaps most commonly travelled direction to get where you're going in life. Well, sorry to say it but this is how the majority of the world live their lives. Follow a direction that has been laid out for you, don't question it, don't change it, and just conform. Now, this may work in certain areas of life, but when it comes to your own personal life, do you want to spend all of it following one direction that may not even be right for you?

If you're following some direction in life currently, and you're questioning it, don't ignore those thoughts. They are telling you something is not right for you, and in the back of your mind, you know there is a better way. But the second we think for ourselves and start expressing that or acting it out, we get challenged. History tells us that if you go outside the lines of conformity you can expect to be crucified. It's true, and we've all been subjected to this. The moment you embrace your unique individuality, you can be supported in that and you will also be challenged in that. Ignore those that would challenge you and follow your own direction.



## ***Why destination matters more***

Can you see the point now that how you get somewhere doesn't matter as much as where you're going? Instead of spending your whole life wandering down roads because they're frequently travelled and more people do that, doesn't mean it's going to lead somewhere you want to be. An example of this is deciding you are going to spend your life working as hard as you can and do your best in every job. That's fine and noble. But if you focus more on direction and are attached to a certain industry or sector, you might job hop or stay in one position because you don't have a clear idea on where you want to be. What happens to people who let their working lives be determined by circumstance? Or even worse, the result of someone else's plan? In most cases they don't get recognised, paid enough or offered chances to advance, and can go through their whole working life unfulfilled, and in the end be fired with little to no thanks and appreciation.

You don't want this to happen to you. Keeping your work ethic intact and choosing an industry to commit to for life is fine but go to the next level and determine your final destination. When you stop

working at the age of 65-70 and you're getting ready to retire and enjoy your senior years, you will be looking back on your past and looking towards the future.

Firstly, you'll want to be sure you've saved enough money for retirement and won't be struggling on the pension until you're 100. Secondly, you will have time to look back and reflect on your working life and want to feel proud of that. Knowing that you did everything you could with everything you were given and made a difference in your chosen career. That doesn't just happen. It happens when you have a destination in mind, which can be a certain position you spend your life working towards or a professional legacy of some kind which leaves a lasting impact on your company and your community.

And if this idea appeals to you, then you owe it to yourself to invest some real time getting to know yourself, what you want and why, then creating a plan to go and get it. But, that's another process all together. Before you commit to that, realise that in the pursuit of reaching your life's destination, you will have multiple directions to choose from. Here's what you can keep in mind long the way.

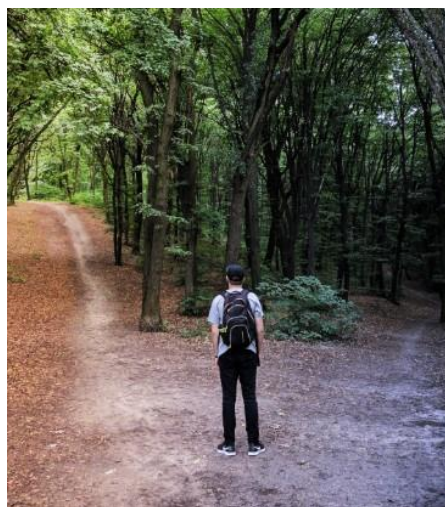
"One direction might now work, so be adaptable and flexible to change".

Whether you follow a direction laid out before you or make it up as you go, realise when it's not leading you to where you want to be, and find another way. This is change, and it requires a lot of thinking and planning, hence why most people don't do it. But take comfort knowing that if one road doesn't lead to your destination, there is always another road nearby, and someone who can point you in the right direction.

"One direction could be taking you longer than you'd like to get where you're going, so look for a quicker way".

Please know that I'm not talking about taking shortcuts in life or the instant gratification approach. Whatever your life destination is, be willing to spend the majority of your life reaching it, but on the way to your ultimate destination, you will stop at many smaller destinations along the way. These are your milestones – the goals and steps you must achieve to get to your ideal place in life. And in today's world, with all the advances in technology and breakthroughs in business, success and personal development, you can always reduce the time it takes to do almost anything. The trick is to focus on quality time spent, instead of quantity time. Why spend three years trying to achieve a goal if there was a way to do it in 3 months?

***Where does this  
leave you now?***



Will you continue with the life direction you've been travelling down, hoping to find what you're looking for along the way..

Or

Are you willing to stop your journey momentarily, spend some time reconnecting with who you are and what you want, and figure out your destination?

The latter is harder, but it makes all the difference. As you are more focused on where you're going, you will be more willing to change direction when needed and you're also willing to journey alone if it means it gets you to where you want to be.

In today's world, we have too many people who follow the road frequently travelled, and they wonder why they're not finding success or feeling fulfilled.

There are plenty of other roads out there that are empty and waiting for a brave solo driver like yourself to take them.

Why not try a new direction today, and reach your life destination?



**Brian McAleer is a Life and Career Coach, helping young adults aged 18-30 get a stronger sense of clarity and purpose to determine their life and career directions**

You can connect with Brian via [LinkedIn](#) or his [Facebook page](#).

Send emails to [info@briamcaleer.com](mailto:info@briamcaleer.com)