

# The philosophy of life's destiny in narrative of the life of frederick douglass



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Frederick Douglass implied in his Narrative, that humans must create their own destiny. He expressed this philosophy in his writing and understood this assumption very well, as he himself was a slave. Douglass expresses his belief on destiny by using examples from his former life in slavery and by stressing the fact that he solely created his life's destiny.

Frederick Douglass was born a slave and under his slave masters he was predestined to die a slave. He had absolutely no say in his future while in the ownership of his masters. He came to a point in his life where he decided he did not want to be a slave for life, so he gradually took control of his own destiny. Douglass describes the dire situation of a slave held for life by saying, " how heavy was the midnight of woe which shrouded in blackness the last ray of hope, and filled the future with terror and gloom" (Douglass xi). This sentence shows that slaves bound in the chains of slavery have almost no prospect on what is to become of them. They are robbed of the right to be their own master and live their life to the fullest.

As Douglass left for Baltimore he said a few last words about his departure from " The Great House". He states, " So strong was my desire, that I thought a gratification of it would fully compensate for whatever loss of comforts I should sustain by the exchange. I left without a regret, and with the highest hopes of future happiness"

(Douglass 25). This quote is evidence that Douglass was becoming the captain of his own destiny. He accepted the opportunity to go to Baltimore and experience life in the city. This life changing choice led to him become educated and gain the tools necessary to eventually be freed from the

bondage of slavery. He was actively taking steps towards his freedom and his own free will.

Douglass' determination to experience free will and freedom was not unchallenged though. Along his journey out of slavery, he met many people who discouraged or even threatened him to stop his plans for the future and accept the fact that he is someone's property. An example of this is seen in a conversation between Douglass and Master Thomas Auld. " He exhorted me to content myself, and be obedient. He told me, if I would be happy, I must lay out no plans for the future. He said, if I behaved myself properly, he would take care of me. Indeed, he advised me to complete thoughtlessness of the future, and taught me to depend solely upon him for happiness" (Douglass 88). Douglass' masters tried to instruct him that he need not be mindful of the future but expect his master will provide for him and control his destiny. His masters would take any measure to ensure that he would not escape the custody of their hands. This illustrates the fact that the path to controlling your own destiny is not easy and is often problematic.

Frederick Douglass was fortunate enough to escape the nightmare that is slavery and lay the path of his future. It was this life changing action that allowed him to take ownership of his destiny. He avoided a toilsome and miserable life in slavery and sought to save others from it too. He wanted all slaves to be free and experience the joy of being your own master. Douglass' philosophy on destiny saved himself from bondage and taught others to save themselves by looking forward and having hope.

This philosophy was a necessary step towards completely freeing the slaves.

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