

Have a Nice Day

By Cliff Dale

Oh, come on, why is it you want to tell me how to live my life right? Yours is such chaos, so full of distrust and disarray, it fills you full of despair and desperation, what life lessons am I supposed to learn from your guidance, do you want to keep me glued to your past, your lifestyle? That is not for me, it is so not me.

I have to question, do I care, do you?

I have decided, I do care, and you, you don't matter, not anymore, I no longer value your opinion, and lately, I have come to realise that you are not my rock, you, you are the anchor, the one that keeps me chained, so fixed, so coldly distant, you are what keeps me in this storm, cast me off, leave me to drift.

There is no right and wrong to life's journey, and with all the twists and turns it isn't as simple as the black and the white, the left or the right, life is, in the grand scheme of things, complex, and I've got to say that my life is genuinely complicated enough, do you hear me, do you know where I'm coming from?

You, you really do need to understand where I am coming from, where I've been, what I've seen, what I had to endure, you know, it's been tough, somehow educational, but now I'm done learning, cut me free. I tell you, you may mention my youthful innocence, but you just don't get me anymore, time has moved on, I have moved on, I am not welded to my past, nor to yours, I have broken free of those rusting chains. Believe me when I say I am now a man and not the boy you once knew, and there's more, let me say, truthfully, I am not my father's son, wanting to follow in the well-trodden path he took, all fixed in one direction to follow the rest of the poor sheep, following the flock and taking the one-way streets that lead to the nowhere places so full of life's dead ends, finding the same old fodder and the final journey to the slaughterhouse. He lived an existence that was not much more than a poor lie, to me, I felt he sacrificed a lifetime just slaving away, and for what, where did it get him, broken and disillusioned, I ask you, what was it for?

Unlike me, he did nothing I'd be proud of, he chose to follow that line, that life, lived that lie, but it is not for me, I am my own man, I won't do what I don't want to, I'm going to live my life, my own way, a slave to no one, I'm going to be rolling my own dice, going to shine like the multi-faceted diamond I know I should be, and while I'm standing on the edge, patiently polishing that stone, smoothing the way for my chance at brilliance, I'm going to make sure that nothing, nothing, gets in my way, and if the world should somehow get in my face, then, then my friend, then I will turn to meet it head-on, and rejoicing in the knowledge that I'd have the balls to simply say, huh, you got nothing I want here, on your bike, go have a nice day.

Take a good hard look around us, is everything truly as it seems? The imminent life ahead is shrouded in the mist of the future, yet its promise is really full of no help, no hope, and many dead-end darkened streets that all lead nowhere, the only exit being through the open doors of the broken homes, the places where the lonely dark nights only hold the raucous voices of those screaming loudly, those knowing they missed their shot at an escape from the drab life pending, realising it lies as splintered as the shattered dream they once nurtured.

That's not for me, no, I tell you, not for me.

I know I would be the first in line to shake on the offer of a helping hand and would like to believe I could be brave enough to take that stand, yet I know I will find my way, I will find the way. Yes, I can still remember that feeling of knocking on all the doors in those dead-end streets, at least all those I could get to, but what was it that I was looking for? Maybe it was for forgiveness, I tell you there was little else to believe in, hope had gone, and any useful help was far on the other side, and deliverance was a naughty word, taboo, a deep thought that should remain forever unspoken. Even then, I still wasn't going to do what I didn't want to, I knew there was more than doing only what I had to, you know that was all that got me through those long and lonely dark nights, and standing at the precipice, cautiously balanced on that ledge, I was still rolling the dice, trying to find the sparkle in my rough diamond, and way back when, when the darkness of this world was in my face, the screams still ringing in my ears, the signposts still obscured, I could still turn round and say, whatever man, go ahead, have a nice day.

It always seemed this world would try to drag me down, intent on bringing only the dirty grey rain to my parade, and whilst I may raise my hands, it was not in surrender, for I was determined to stand my ground, intent on finding the way. I could always find an outlet for my exasperation, could clearly see the sparkle from my glorious diamond that offered that glimmer of hope in the sadness, that spark of courage to catch the distant light, for me, I always knew there were more dice to roll, there were always more ledges to stand on, I knew I would find that crossroad that would signpost my route, drive me from this inequity and a life that had no care, yes, the world was always in my face, but I could always say, what the hell, you may go first, I will have myself a nice day.

I must say that it didn't come easy, certainly wasn't quick, but I came across this disguised junction, just arrived, unannounced, unprepared, and it seemed eerily quiet, I couldn't see beyond it but just knew it was the right path to take, something was calling, pulling me in, or was it something pushing me out, who knows? The biggest fear was that first step into the unknown, making that grand leap of faith, but once taken, well, it was clear that this was the route I should have taken when I'd glimpsed it in the distant past. Back then, the dice had been rolled the other way, the numbers all too low, yet the diamonds had shone brightly, what I realise now, a tad late perhaps, is that it was all lit from behind, I should have recognised the glint of hope that was always within my grasp, that help was within my reach, all I needed

to do was stretch a little further, look a little deeper, but I had been closed, believing in what I was told, not trusting my own instincts, sad, more fool me.

It all seems a dream to me now, the stain of the past has finally gone, and even though the past floods in every now and then, I recognise which direction I must travel, there is still a clearly lit pathway that leads me on, drives me forward, takes me further, way further from my past. Someday, I hope to leave my mark in this place, a good clean footprint in the local sands of time, something to believe in, real hope, a clear direction that lasts for some time. I know not when my journey ends, for I am sure it will end at some point, they all do, there is a final destination, a point beyond which you cannot progress, but, for now, I have no regrets, except maybe that I should have looked a little deeper, a little harder, tried more often, seen things for what they were, not looked for the excuses to why they should have been, ah well, I can hear the music to my life's song, making up the words as I travel along –

*Still, the past is well behind me, the gilded future lies a way ahead,
So focussed on my journey, just trying to keep a level head,
and with feet firmly planted, standing tall and feeling proud,
I am rooted in this present, no head up in the clouds,
and when things get up in my face, I have this favourite refrain,
it's become a personal mantra, as I say these words again,
as my diamonds spark light around me, the dice all roll my way,
I just give thanks and take it, saying, yes, let's all have a nice day.*

Cliff Dale – © February 2021

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