

THE INTERSECTIONS WE CROSS DETERMINE OUR DESTINY

Irv Sternberg

Life is a journey during which we come across a series of intersections. Some of them are expected while others are not. These intersections determine the quality and direction of our journey throughout our lives. They determine our destiny.

Starting with birth, we proceed down a path to our final days, encountering intersections that change our lives for better or worse. To bring order to our lives, we hope to cross the intersections safely. This “safe” journey includes having a happy childhood, obtaining the best education possible, determining a career that will be both emotionally and financially rewarding, finding love, and raising a family to the best of our abilities.

But even as we proceed down this “safe” path, we come across potentially dangerous intersections. For some, their childhood is not as happy as they would wish—for a variety of reasons. It could be an unstable parent or poverty or chronic health problems. It is a struggle for the child ensnared in this predicament.

The next intersection, education, could be hazardous too—a poor school system, incompetent teachers, or a need to drop out before graduation. Or, it might be a positive experience built on outstanding, encouraging teachers who exert positive influence in our lives and steer us in the right direction. There is a special place in Heaven for those educators.

In early adulthood, men begin the search for a successful career. In recent decades, women have done the same, even as they become housekeepers and mothers. Navigating this

intersection can be tricky, and not everyone makes it across, especially in current times. This is the first generation in my memory that is struggling to perform better than their parents or even match their success.

Finding love these days has taken a curious turn. Where love was once found in a school, at church, in the workplace, on a vacation, or on date arranged by a friend or family member, there are now online dating services and, of course, the meat warehouses known as bars. And marriages don't last as long as they used to. Half of them fail. Finding and keeping love is a difficult intersection to cross.

But if we have succeeded in traversing all these intersections during our life journey, we still face one more—retirement and our late years. The fortunate among us will have planned for this time. They enjoy the freedom to spend time as they wish—to play golf, fish, travel, go to the theater or indulge their grandchildren. But for many others, the so-called “golden years” are tarnished. Financial and health problems can generate despair. And the loss of a longtime friend or devoted mate becomes a devastating burden to bear.

In the end, we look back at our life journey and make an evaluation. The lucky among us can say: “I crossed all these intersections and not only survived, I thrived!”

###

(496 words)