

" You guys have a lot of potential, but there are no guarantees of success. This season is like an open book, and you guys must write the pages," said our soccer coach ,Mr. Ziminski, during pre-season. These few words inspired my fellow teammates and I to work at new and even higher level to achieve our goal of a successful season. We believed in our coach's words, we controlled our own destiny; the only way we can achieve our goal of a successful season would be to work extremely hard before the actual season starts.

In contradictory to the beliefs of my teammates and I, in the novel Slaughterhouse 5 by Kurt Vonnegut, Billy Pilgrim, the main character in the novel, is lead to believe that there is no "open book"; an individual's destiny remains predetermined and unchangeable.

Upon speaking to the Tralfamadorians, aliens from another planet, they explain to Billy that his constant "time tripping", moving back and forth throughout time instantaneously, should not matter to him since his life is already predetermined. Why does it matter that you live your life in chronological order? According to the view point of the Tralfamadorians, the same exact things are going to happen, an idea that is indeed biased. Based on the fact that Tralfamadorians cannot understand the human concept of time, they have the ability to pick and choose when they want to live each moment of their lives ,unlike humans, especially Billy Pilgrim who has no control of his unpredictable "time tripping[s]."

Furthermore, the Tralfamadorian's belief that life is predetermined has caused them to concentrate on the good things in life and forget about the bad, which has lead them to become very un-sentimental life forms. They constantly use the phrase "so it goes" for everything that goes wrong, including such emotion evoking things like deaths. They show no remorse or sorrow because of the fact that they can just jump to a happier point in their lives when ever the want to. Thus causing the happier points in life to eventually loose their sparkle because of the fact that if everything in one's life is happy, then one begins to take it for granted and it looses it's appeal. Therefore, one needs bad days in one's life in order to truly enjoy the good ones.

For the most part, the majority of the people on my soccer team believe that our lives are not predetermined and that they are dictated by our own actions. Consequently, we worked extremely hard in the off season to be able to achieve our goal of having a successful season. As for Billy Pilgrim, his "time tripping" made it impossible for him to get a chance to control his own destiny, and therefore his life was just dictated to him. Therefore, the Tralfamadorian's view of life being predetermined might be true on their planet, but as for on Earth, since our lives are lived in a chronological order with no way to skip over the bad, one must work as hard as they can to achieve their goals before that "open book" of life slams shut at one's demise.

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