

*The world is always ending, and the end is always being averted, by love or foolishness or just plain old dumb luck- Neil Gaiman*

I met a girl in high school, and we fell in and out of love over a two-year span. Seasons change and I graduated single. Then I entered a new era: the life of work. I really don't prefer to be alone, so I wandered through a few relationships over the next two years. Eventually, I found myself single yet again. This became my routine of getting up, riding the bus, and returning home from work. Then a strange thing happened.

I have mentioned before that I had a motto. *If she went away then it was not meant to be. However, if she returned then it was destiny.* One day on the bus, there was a young boy sitting next to me. He was slightly, autistic, and kept pulling out of his wallet a picture of a girl. What else do you do on a bus but stare at others. I was fascinated by this boy. Unknown to me, destiny was staring at me also.

That boy kept muttering to himself and looking at this picture. Back and forth went the photo: in and out of his wallet. I glanced over and smiled at what he was doing. Some autistic kids are interesting. Then I stopped cold in my stare. That was a picture of my Ex-girlfriend from high school. Dumb luck was staring at me too.

Ok, that was strange. Why did he have a picture of her in his wallet? I didn't know him. That threw me off, but the bus came to my stop, it was time to go to work. Out of sight and out of mind. Months went by and I forgot all about that strange day. One fine summer day, I found myself on bus again. Look at that, I met an old high school friend. We made small talk about the past during high school. As always, you make gestures to keep in touch. "it was nice to see you

again” I said. That was about it, so I thought. I got off the bus and went to work. Seems my life is like Groundhog Day.

That weekend my phone rang. It was my long-lost Ex-girlfriend. She had been talking to the girl I met on the bus and decided to give me a call. We were married a year later. Was that me seeing my motto come true? Had she returned? As it was, the marriage lasted about 11 ½ years. I guess not all motto’s work. Was marrying her dumb luck? That whole scenario played out over several months. Were they chance meetings? Even just seeing her picture with that autistic boy brought about feelings that I thought were gone. I know so many stories of relationships beginning by chance. Is that how it goes one way or the other, or was it dumb luck?

I’m just asking, was it fate or dumb luck? What do you believe in? I know that people are turned on or off by many things. First impressions seem so real, yet we know virtually nothing about them in that moment. How could we think it feels so right in a chance meeting? Then, years later you hate them? Is it fate playing a cruel joke?

Constantly, I have asked my daughter if Murphy hates me. You know, the guy who made Murphy’s Law. *Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.* The cigarette smoke always drifts in the direction of the non-smoker regardless of the direction of the breeze. The one wrench or drill bit you need will always be the one missing from the tool chest. (This is a favorite) If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor, by the time you get there you'll feel better. Don't make an appointment and you'll stay sick. Refer back to Murphy (whoever he is).

It’s the same with relationships. Was seeing my Ex’s picture on a bus dumb luck? In the dictionary, Dumb luck is described as *good fortune*. Tell that to my divorce. I like this further description, *the way in which something good happens completely by chance, without being*

*planned or deserved*. In the Bible they talk about predestination. That's where a divine power is guiding your actions to meet a purpose. Is meeting someone in an unusual way predestination? A soul mate encounter? Did I deserve a certain fate, or was dumb luck orchestrating my life?

I read this story of a pastor who had a vision in his mind of the perfect Christian wife. His name was Joshua Harris and he wrote about it in a book called *I kissed dating goodbye*. It's a great story. Over and over he tried to date girls he thought were right for him. Joshua had a list. They had to be virgins. Of course, they would be in love with God. Probably pretty, and willing to be a pastor's wife. We all have a picture of what the perfect spouse should look like. Providence, murphy, predestination, and fate just might have other plans.

The story goes that he was about to ask a certain girl (he always sat beside in church) to marry him. Joshua was so convinced that she was the one. In church, that day, she tells people that she is going to marry another boy. He was devastated. There was Joshua sitting in his office closet crying. How could God let him down? He was so sure. In the front of the office was the church secretary. She was a rough, non-virgin, newly Christian type. One day, she would become his wife.

I love that true story. Was his destiny dumb luck or fate? I just feel that people put too much effort into finding the right relationship. I know at-least two couples that are about 10 years apart. The perfect marriages? Not likely, I know they have had struggles. We all have struggles in relationships. Yet, they have taken their age difference with a grain of salt. It works in some strange dumb luck way. I say dumb luck because, by the rules, it should not work.

The rules go this way. Pick someone who is attractive. Preferably someone who others find attractive. (bad idea) Make sure they believe almost everything you do. How about the same

tastes, desires and look on life? They will fit your prince charming or ultimate woman. Then you marry, possibly have 2.3 kids, and a beautiful house. I bet you will travel to places you both want to see. Buy cars and furniture you both like. Even pick the right cat and dog you both agree on. Probably be the same age more or less. Great rules, right? If you gained all of those things in a relationship that would most certainly be dumb luck.

Yet, people don't want their relationship to be dumb luck. It seems odd because fortune is associated with those two words. Instead we try and control fate. We have a list. I was asked by a friend to make a list of what I wanted in a woman. I did not add "no baggage" to that list. Would you? You would think it should be near the top. Instead we write down the perfect stuff. The things that are more than just dumb luck. They are near impossible.

Here is another one. I briefly dated a girl in high school one summer. After drifting away, she married the next guy she met. I married the next girl too. Later in life we both became postal workers. We both divorced, and became trainers at work. Are we married now? No, but we probably should be just because it looks good. Recently, she was staying late at work. A co-worker that she knew for many years came by to chat as they always did. This time, something was different. They ended up dating. They just got married too. He is much more suited for her than I was.

Is it dumb luck that we never married? Dumb luck that she stayed late and her work mate was still there? What changes a person's fate? Is it fortune? What attaches fortune to the phrase *dumb luck*? I looked up quotes and many other ideas associated with dumb luck. They all mentioned two things: fortune and destiny. Yet, the word dumb seems to mention speechless and

silent. We emphasize fortune and not silence. It makes me lean towards fate. It's described as *the supposed force, principle, or power that predetermines events. Not random but predetermined.*

Is fate the answer? Was I predestined for divorce? Was it dumb luck? I believe it's all the above. We were made a certain way. That way will follow a certain path. Obviously, I would marry a rock and roll girl before I considered country. I would be with friends who loved travel vs the opera. There are things about us that steer us towards fate.

Did I still love my high school girlfriend two years later on a bus? Certainly, she still loved me after all that time, right? Dumb luck seems mystical. Yet, it's practical. Two people work in the same place. They already have a common trait: work. I know two who met in an alcohol rehab meeting. It became a disaster. I suppose two drinkers are predestined to meet. The bottle is common. Yet, luck does not shine kindly upon them. Addiction seems a dumb way to meet. However, I am sure there are some stories of success. Why do we end up in some of the relationships we do? Then we have the word destiny.

I love four words that are associated with destiny: *doom, fortune, attracted, and powerful.* Is a random dumb luck meeting just a coincidence? I know so many relationships that spelled doom from the beginning. Yet, their meeting was mysterious and even magical. I know others that swear by their dumb luck adventure. My lawyer said that their marriage is bonded because they got lost in a tropical jungle on their honeymoon. It covered all those words. Being lost could spell doom, yet it fostered a powerful attraction.

I believed in destiny so bad. There were friends who said "don't marry her." I was so sure. My dad approved. It was not dumb luck but destiny. Fortune was smiling on me. Yet, Murphy was saying "what could possibly go wrong?" People get so focused that they miss the obvious

signs. We want the perfect so much that the flaws seem so insignificant. I'm not sure dumb luck is shining on us. I wonder if we blindly fall into it.

It comes down to poor choices. I suppose people hide who they are. This statement seems to rub people the wrong way. *What a man allows, happens*. Then girls begin to scream that women have choices. They sure do. The same choices too. The point of the saying is that if we say no, then it's not going to happen. If, a man says no, then it will not happen. Yes, a woman could say yes, but if he says no then she does it alone. Is it dumb luck that we say yes or no?

People focus so much on the victim. She wanted it so bad and did not deserve that fate. He said no and it's not fair to her. The poor victim. The pastor in the closet said yes, but she said no. In the end, he married a woman that went against many of the things he dreamt of. He said yes while his list said no. I think we secretly want dumb luck. What a great story. It's magical, mysterious, and balks against fate, murphy, and predestination. That excites the reckless side of us. I also think it makes us blind to the warning signs. Are we our own victim?

I'll admit I have no really good answer. Dumb luck works and does not work all at the same time. It's the same with prearranged marriages. How about destiny. I had another motto in my head. *If it's Gods choice, then she will be in my face no matter where I am*. As it was, with my second wife, no matter what I did, she showed up. That was a crazy feeling. Yet, I had made a small path for her to be on. My list narrowed the choice. I suppose it singled her out. Was it dumb luck or was I inadvertently looking for it?

Do we make our own luck? I know a friend who dated in a Christian university. The idea of a Christian school is to teach you about God and get a spouse. It's not true but in a way it is. So, my friend had enough of looking for a mate. There was a singing tour that traveled across the

country during the summer break. They would sing at many churches and festivals. It was the perfect way to get away from the dating rat race. So, he joined up.

In the meantime, he had spied out this girl in the school office. What is it with Christian secretaries? Why are they always attractive? He liked her a lot but was afraid to ask her out. Anyways, she too, needed a break from school dating. She signed up for the tour as well. Both of them had no clue that the other was interested or even on the singing tour? Upon entering the bus, she found her seat. There she sat down for the long journey to the next town. He came aboard and sat in the only seat left (next to her). Did dumb luck or fate put them in the last two seats together? The rest is history. Dumb luck shined upon their meeting and they got married.

They both had chosen to abandon the ways of dating. Dating is hard work. Sometimes we need a break. Make a path away from the thing you want. Who has the right rules to gaining the perfect relationship? Maybe, dumb luck does. Was it fate they met? Was God moving heaven and earth to bring them together after they both seeming quit looking. It's smart to have a list. Why pick an apple when you love oranges. Yet, dumb luck seems to work better most of the time.

*The harder I work, the luckier I get- mystery quote*

A few people throughout history said this quote above. I think that means many people agree with it's meaning. You work hard and fortune shines on you. Dumb luck means you set the cosmos in motion by dating, dreaming, and making a list. It subconsciously bends your mind towards a certain type of person. It's not just about love relationships either. Siskal and Ebert rated movies together. Jobs and Gates loved computers. Laurel and Hardy liked comedy. It seems not only dumb luck but similarities congruently play a role.

Many times, lists don't work. Possibly you talked yourself into looking for a certain type of mate. Maybe your friends played a role. We should listen to advice. We should equally take advice with a grain of salt. I believe taking the time to see clearly helps. Sex tends to blind us. The more we desire the more blind we become. Yet, relationships are forged by so many factors. I do believe that fate, destiny, and random dumb luck play a role.

This should compel us to go further. What if it's all about our actions? In many ways I call dating *The Chase*. What are we chasing in a relationship? Trouble will find trouble. I'd like to think that happiness can be found too. I know that when people give up, destiny seems to find them. It does not mean the chase is off. We are seemingly always looking. Yet, there are moments when we pause and take a break. I wonder if the relationship chase never sleeps. It's always looking for those who want one. Sometimes that's good and other times it's bad.

People hide themselves. Are they scared or hurt? Is it dumb luck that they met their soul mate? I just heard of a couple marrying in a Costco. It's the place they had their first date? I thought going to church was somewhat odd for a first date: at Costco? Did someone or something set us up in those places? Possibly, we set ourselves up. Putting us in a common place to chase one another. Did the other person even know they were being pursued? I am so curious about the chase for a relationship. Let's move on towards the chase now.