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your life and helping yourself move along that path, looking out for yourself, and making sure obstacles don't deter you from the direction you are meant to pursue. While those two philosophies might seem to be in conflict with one another, and perhaps they are, they can also coexist in the harmonious symphony that forms the music of your life.

Gail Perry • Jun. 09, 2014



I'm a constant believer in fate. Things happen for a reason; there is a path we move

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had made different choices, but the fatalist side of me takes comfort in the belief that the choices I've made were the choices I was supposed to make and it was just up to me to figure that out.

I can point precisely to the moment when I chose to join the accounting profession. One could say I joined the profession in my early teens when my forward-thinking father introduced me to his CPA who spent an entire day giving me a crash course on basic bookkeeping skills so that I would be able to get a job should I ever need to support myself. Or maybe I joined the profession in my 20s when I balanced my first checkbook and took such delight in agreeing the bank statement and checkbook numbers to the penny. Or was it that first job I took out of college, ignoring my shiny new degree in journalism and English and choosing to call myself a bookkeeper instead?

Some would suggest I joined the profession when I went back to school, ignored the warnings of accountant co-workers who said a person who had never taken a single accounting course in college couldn't go back to school, take every course required to sit for the CPA exam in three semesters, sit for the exam, and pass the whole thing in one sitting, and come out on the other side working in the Chicago tax department of a Big 8 (now Big 4) accounting firm. I certainly felt like a member of the accounting profession at that time.

While each of these were changing points in my life, moments, events that altered my direction, solidified my enjoyment of the type of work I've chosen to do, I believe the moment I decided to join the accounting profession was the moment I decided to serve the accounting profession. Writing for members of the profession combines my love and understanding of numbers and my ability to put words together in a reasonable fashion with a hope that I can make a difference in some of the lives I touch.

It was when fate stepped in and provided me with the opportunity to start writing

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numbers, but used his understanding and insights to help mold the direction the accounting profession has taken as it strives to embrace technology and move to a higher level that is not mired in footing and ticking and basic compliance but that can serve its clients with analysis and insights and forecasts and game plans for moving forward.

I don't know Greg LaFollette well, or maybe I should say I don't know him well enough, because there is so much to know, so many levels of depth and experience. But I know that his presence in the accounting profession has changed the profession itself. There was this party, a roast, if you will, to honor him, and there were the obligatory jokes and jibes at his expense, shared memories, and more than a few tears.

People spoke of the man with reverence that was specifically tied to his contributions and his legacy. There are others leaving their mark in this profession, and more will follow. I personally have the honor of picking up a torch Greg once held as editor of this publication. I told him and others I wouldn't presume to be able to fill his shoes, but that wasn't quite right. I have joined this profession, taking the deep dive. I'm where I am through mysterious forces of fate as they combine with my own decisions. The results will play out over time, and I'm proud to walk in any shoes I can get my hands, or, more appropriately, feet, on, particularly those that have left such distinguished footprints.

Safe travels, Greg, as you continue on your journey.

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