

Learning from Detours

By Vanessa W. Snyder

Detours are an inconvenience. They are unexpected and frustrating and beyond our control.

Clearly, I've been on one as I continue this doctoral journey. I won't get into the details of this detour other than to say it has required me to do a kind of restart.

Yes, I honestly thought I would be finished with this doctorate thing by now, but I hit a detour and it has not been fun. Detours slow us down, change our path and as frustrating as they are, they do ultimately get us to our destination.

And if you think about it, detours help you learn new ways of getting to where you want to be.

In my case, this detour has taught me patience (again), resilience, humility, control, boldness, and confidence. Yes, that's a lot I know but I'm a whole different person from the one who began this journey almost five years ago.

I'm stronger, smarter (I think) and much more self-aware.

Aware that I can't crawl back in time and correct my missteps or anyone else's. Aware that I need to take ownership of my process. Aware that sometimes I act or don't act out of fear. Aware that the ability to focus until I reach my goal is critical.

Detours are like that. When you hit a detour, you have no choice but to perk up and pay more attention to where you are trying to go. You even start to notice things perhaps you didn't notice before.

On detours, with each twist and turn you learn about your strengths, your motivations, your insecurities and even your strengths.

So yes, I've been on a long, winding, grueling detour but I feel myself slowly rounding the curve as I learn and grow.

If you're on your own detour, just hold on tight and stay focused, take it all in. You will reach your destination.