

**Give Up Your Idea That Life Is Linear**  
**By: Diana Treviño**

**Abstract**

This poem is an invitation for social workers to consider personal development as a practice. It also frames recovery as personal growth; something that is universal to all. The main goal of this poem is to normalize the process of recovery. The social work core value of dignity and worth of a person calls social workers to meet their clients where they are and enhance their self-determination. Progress is not often linear. Personal growth can wax and wane, double back, and pause. There are many opportunities throughout a person's life course to refine their practices. Often, people in recovery from substance abuse, trauma, and grief, lament about failure and having to start over. However, revisiting developmental milestones does not negate the therapeutic and personal work that has been done previously. This poem also suggests that people should honor their previous lifespan steps by viewing their past choices and behaviors as an integral part of their ongoing journey. When current steps follow paths people have crossed before, they can review milestones with deeper, wiser introspection. This poem acknowledges, with gratitude, that people are given many opportunities to strengthen their practices.

## **Give Up Your Idea That Life Is Linear**

*(For all those who share my path, with gratitude.)*

*Give up our idea that life is linear.*

*Where you are*

*Where you will go*

*And where you have been*

*Have crossed each other*

*More than once*

*And will again.*

*Stop trying to get there from here.*

*Drop your belief you've reversed*

*And need to start again*

*Or have come to an end.*

*Every dark, cold, hard, winding road*

*You've ever trudged and bled upon,*

*Passes every birth place of hope*

*Where you've recovered.*

*Every silver lined, star-laden,*

*Glitter filled path you ever flit across,*

*Bares memorial to both victory and loss.*

*Give up our idea that life is linear.*

*Not the ebb and flow of great ocean tides*

*Nor the seasons that mark the ageless passage of time*

*Nor the heavenly flow of the universe's eternal celestial glow*

*Adhere to linear design.*

*You are no less natural or divine.*