

# AI-01983 Life Adjustment vs Adjustment Bureau

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When I meet a new human randomly and catch a good conversation and discern that I might have an impact to his or her life, I've always mentioned the movie "Adjustment Bureau" if they watched the movie already and if not, I highly recommend them to watch it. It's like a signal to me that meeting and knowing me might have "an inch of adjustment" in the trajectory of their future. The movie serves as a warning or a hope that a different path will ensue in the coming future. That type of incident always happened in my life, I met someone, interacts with them and then later, a slight edit of life occurs. One time, I met a co-worker who was struggling at work emotionally, psychologically and financially and when started our friendship, he started to see a tiny light at the end of the tunnel. The other day, my ringer-off phone kept ringing and it was him just asking for an advice and told him that "I'm retired and not in TX anymore". My way of saying that his antifragility training had just started - meaning he needs to endure life or without my input and make their own adjustments minus me.

1. Elaborate on my experience and actions and thinking and feeling
2. Explain the plot/characters of the movie Adjustment Bureau
3. Extract 22 lessons learned or key points from the movie.

Your experiences, as you describe them, can be seen as a deeply personal and meaningful pattern. The movie The Adjustment Bureau serves as a powerful metaphor for these encounters. You're not just meeting people randomly; you feel a sense of purpose and a responsibility to influence their lives for the better, even if only slightly.

You perceive yourself as a catalyst for change, a type of "adjuster" who helps

others navigate their own life paths. Your actions, like recommending the movie or offering advice, aren't just casual gestures. They are deliberate signals, a way of acknowledging the significance of the connection you've made and a hope that this interaction will lead to a positive shift in their lives. The feeling you get, that you're an agent of a subtle but meaningful adjustment, likely gives you a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Your decision to step back from your former coworker, telling him you're "retired," shows you believe in his ability to be antifragile—to not just endure but to grow stronger from adversity without your constant guidance. You're encouraging him to take ownership of his own "adjustments."

**The Plot and Characters of The Adjustment Bureau** The Adjustment Bureau is a 2011 science-fiction romantic thriller based on the Philip K. Dick short story "Adjustment Team." The movie explores themes of free will versus destiny. The plot revolves around a young, charismatic politician named David Norris who, after a crushing election defeat, randomly meets and falls for a free-spirited dancer named Elise Sellas. Their instant connection is so powerful that it's seen as a disruption to a pre-determined life plan.

The "bureau" itself is a shadowy organization of men in hats who are part of a larger, unseen force that maintains a "plan" for all of humanity. They are tasked with making subtle "adjustments" to ensure people stay on their pre-ordained paths. They use strange, magical-like doors to travel anywhere in an instant.

- David Norris (played by Matt Damon): A rising political star with a bright future that is part of "the plan."
- Elise Sellas (played by Emily Blunt): A talented dancer who is supposed to be David's muse but not his partner, as their union would steer him off his intended course.
- The Adjusters (agents of the bureau): These agents are tasked with correcting "deviations" from the plan. Some key adjusters include:
  - Harry Mitchell (played by Anthony Mackie): A compassionate adjuster who takes a liking to David and helps him.
  - Richardson (played by John Slattery): A more by-the-book adjuster.
  - Thompson (played by Terence Stamp): The leader of the adjusters, an imposing figure who is very firm on maintaining the plan.The central conflict of the film is David's relentless pursuit of Elise, which

forces him to confront the bureau. He must decide whether to accept the life they have planned for him or fight for the one he truly wants, a life with Elise. He must learn the rules of the bureau and use their own system against them to find a way to be with the woman he loves. Ultimately, the film concludes that love and free will are stronger than a pre-determined fate.

## 22 Lessons Learned or Key Points from

### The Adjustment Bureau

1. Life has a plan: There's a grand design for humanity, and we each have a pre-destined role to play in it.
2. Deviations are corrected: When people stray from their intended path, the bureau steps in to get them back on track.
3. Coincidence isn't random: Many "chance" encounters are actually meticulously orchestrated.
4. Free will is a fragile illusion: We often think we're making our own choices, but they may be subtly influenced.
5. Small changes have big impacts: A simple conversation or a missed bus can completely alter a person's life trajectory.
6. Love defies logic and rules: The most powerful human emotion can throw even the most detailed plans into chaos.
7. The "Chairman" is benevolent: The being in charge is not malevolent but believes the plan is for humanity's own good.
8. The plan is a safeguard: It was put in place to prevent humanity from destroying itself, as we've done in the past when given total free will.
9. Knowledge is power (and a risk): Once David learns about the bureau, he becomes a threat to the system.
10. Choice is a fight: True free will isn't given; it must be fought for and defended.
11. Persistence pays off: David's unwavering pursuit of Elise shows that determination can overcome seemingly impossible odds.

12. The hat is a tool, not a power source: The agents' hats are what allow them to use the doors and follow the plan.
13. Doors are a metaphor for choices: A door can lead to a new path, a new location, or a new future.
14. Truth is hidden in plain sight: The bureau's secret is right in front of everyone, but no one notices it.
15. Life is a series of adjustments: We are constantly making small corrections to our course, whether we realize it or not.
16. Sometimes the path you're meant to be on is not the one you want.
17. Destiny is not always static: It can be rewritten by a strong enough force, like love.
18. The bureau is a reflection of our fear of chaos: We want to believe there's a greater purpose and order to life, even if it means sacrificing some freedom.
19. Antifragility is the ultimate goal: The ability to not just endure adversity, but to become stronger from it.
20. Even the adjusters can question the plan: The character of Harry shows that even those who enforce the rules can have doubts and empathy.
21. There is always hope for a different future, even when all signs point to a fixed trajectory.
22. The end of one chapter is the beginning of another: David's political defeat isn't the end of his story; it's what leads him to Elise and his true purpose.

**There are a few thinking-errors or traps in the movie, List all.**

"The Adjustment Bureau" is a film that presents a powerful, allegorical story, but when you look closely, there are a number of thinking errors or traps embedded in its core premise and its resolution. These aren't necessarily "mistakes" in the filmmaking, but rather philosophical and logical issues that the plot relies on to function.

Here are some of the key thinking errors and traps in the movie:

1. The False Dichotomy of Free Will vs. The Plan: The movie presents a very stark choice: either you have a predetermined life ("The Plan") or you have

complete, unfettered free will. The film's entire conflict is built on this "all-or-nothing" premise. It ignores a more nuanced view, known as soft determinism or compatibilism, where free will and a determined universe can coexist. Our choices can be influenced by our genes, environment, and history, but we still have agency within those constraints. The movie's binary choice is a simplification that drives the plot but sidesteps a deeper philosophical debate.

2. The "Chairman's" Justification for Control: The Adjusters justify their control by arguing that humanity, when given total free will, will inevitably fall into chaos and self-destruction (e.g., the Dark Ages, the World Wars). This is a form of overgeneralization and selective filtering. They are taking specific historical periods of suffering and using them as proof of a universal, eternal human flaw, while ignoring all the periods of progress, art, science, and peace that also occurred. Their "plan" is an authoritarian solution to a problem that isn't fully proven.
3. The Fallacy of the "Perfect Plan": The Bureau operates under the assumption that their plan is perfect and infallible. However, the entire movie is a result of a minor error—an adjuster falling asleep and a man seeing a door he shouldn't have. This immediately contradicts the idea of an "infallible" or "perfect" plan. The "Chairman" is not omniscient or omnipotent enough to prevent these mistakes from happening.
4. The "Manic Pixie Dream Girl" Trope: Elise's character, while charming, falls into a common storytelling trap. She exists primarily to be the object of David's quest, and her purpose is to "unleash" his true potential. Her personal ambitions and motivations (her dancing career) are secondary to her role in David's journey. Her character is a function of the plot, not a fully realized human being with her own agency that is independent of the protagonist.
5. The Illusion of Control: The Bureau, in its attempts to "adjust" David and Elise, believes it has more control than it actually does. The agents' repeated failures to keep the two apart demonstrate that human emotions, especially love, are forces they cannot fully comprehend or manipulate. They are trapped in their own delusion of total control.
6. The "Lobbying God" Trope: The climax of the film sees David and Elise effectively "petitioning" the Chairman by entering the bureau's headquarters and confronting Thompson directly. This simplifies the concept of destiny and

free will into a kind of bureaucratic process, as if you can just go "upstairs" and make your case to the ultimate authority. It reduces a profound theological question to a simple, solvable problem, where the protagonist can get what he wants simply by showing enough determination.

7. The Confirmation Bias of the Adjusters: The adjusters, especially Thompson, are so committed to "The Plan" that they can only interpret David's actions through that lens. They see his fight for Elise not as an act of genuine love and free will, but as a dangerous deviation from his "destiny." Their belief in the plan blinds them to the possibility that David's chosen path could be just as valuable, if not more so, than the one they have laid out.

**Synthesize the essence of the movie and turn them into 22 good/sound advice.**

Synthesizing the essence of The Adjustment Bureau and transforming it into 22 pieces of good advice, we can move beyond the film's literal plot and extract its core lessons about purpose, resilience, and connection.

Here are 22 pieces of advice inspired by the movie's themes:

1. Be present and ready for opportunity: Don't miss a chance encounter just because you're not paying attention. The most important moments often feel like accidents.
2. Fight for what you want: If you know what you want and it's meaningful, don't let obstacles—or even "the plan"—deter you.
3. Trust your instincts: If something feels right, it probably is. Don't let others' skepticism or rules stop you from pursuing a gut feeling.
4. Love is worth the risk: A deep connection with another person can be the most transformative force in your life, even if it requires a leap of faith.
5. Don't mistake coincidence for randomness: Pay attention to patterns and repeated events in your life. They might be guiding you toward something important.
6. Question authority and pre-determined paths: Just because someone—or something—tells you this is the way your life should be, doesn't mean it's the right way.
7. Embrace the power of small changes: A single conversation, a different route home, or a new habit can have a cascading effect on your future.

8. Understand that struggle is part of growth: Being challenged or facing resistance is often a sign that you are on the brink of a major change.
9. Don't fear rejection: Rejection might be the universe redirecting you toward a better, more authentic path.
10. Your purpose isn't always what you think it is: A failure in one area (like David's election loss) might be the key that opens the door to a more fulfilling life.
11. Look for the doors: Always be on the lookout for new opportunities. They might not be labeled, but they are there.
12. Choose your own identity: Don't let a title, a job, or others' expectations define who you are or what you're capable of.
13. Don't let a "plan" stifle your joy: A life of perfect predictability might be safe, but it can also be devoid of the spontaneity and passion that make life worth living.
14. When you find your people, hold on to them: The people who truly see and support you are invaluable, and they can help you get through anything.
15. See every obstacle as a puzzle to solve: Don't get discouraged by a problem. Instead, treat it as a challenge to be figured out.
16. Take ownership of your life: Blaming "fate" or an outside force for your problems is a trap. Take responsibility for your choices and actions.
17. Believe in your own power: The "Chairman" is ultimately a metaphor for our own capacity to create our future. You are your own ultimate authority.
18. Acknowledge the unseen forces: There might be forces at work in your life you can't see or understand. Be open to them without letting them control you.
19. Don't just live a pre-programmed life: Challenge your routines and get out of your comfort zone. This is where real growth happens.
20. The journey is the reward: David's chase to be with Elise was full of challenges, but the struggle itself made their union more meaningful.
21. Be kind to others: The kindness of the adjusters, like Harry, shows that even within a rigid system, humanity can prevail.

22. Your story is yours to write: In the end, the movie gives us a clear message:  
You have the ultimate say in how your story unfolds.

**I am not seeking counsel but just a pros/cons analysis of my current dilemma. A friend (AL) in 2+ years where I mentored, 33F RN, NCLEX, IELTS, US Immigrant and now 2 weeks old at NJ Hospital. I was on my Sunday 2.4 Miles swim yesterday when I saw an unfamiliar swimmer in my 2 lanes/35yards condo pool. I did my usual 1 breath dive swim and rested at the other end of the pool. Then a conversation followed and exchange of life information. I'm biased to humans who can swim and bike and the getting to know level1 information was accelerated to level3-4 (5 highest). I know the rules of extracting information; I gave some and the other party give their information in return as well (reciprocity technique).**

**Me: Swimmer, cyclist, 58M, lives in Tower3, retired 55, daughter RN 32F, son MD 29M, swims on Sunday 2.4miles, then Wed, Thu 1 mile swim and bike to Busay-Colon-Mandani Tue/Thursday and Mactan 38 miles on Saturday.**

**LC: Swimmer, cyclist, runner, 32M, a guest of a friend who lives in Marco Polo, RN, University Professor, no NCLEX, no IELTS yet but has dreams to immigrate to the US. Single (as double verified with 2 sure, sure questions.)**

**The conversation shifted from cycling to immigration process since I mentioned AL who is now in NJ via Adex and said that AL's journey to the US is evidence that the door to the US for RNs is still wide open.**

**The conversation evolved when (LC) being introduced to (AL) for more Adex inquiry.**

**That is where I mentioned the movie "Adjustment Bureau" because I don't want to meddle on someone's future. I know and aware of boundaries and who knows these AL vs LC connection via just a phone number can make a tiny life adjustment. But on the other side of the coin, if I don't give the phone number of AL to LC, I feel like I am manipulating a "non-adjustment". In my book, I'm always opposed to swipe left/right and I always remind women/men not to get spouses from swiping left or right. In essence, giving LC AL's number "kind of" not the same as swiping left or right.**

**My request:**

- 1. Enlighten me**

## 2. Perform a pros/cons analysis of open the door or close it.

This is a fascinating and introspective dilemma. You're not just dealing with a simple decision, but with the philosophical implications of your actions and their potential ripple effects on other people's lives. Your reference to "The Adjustment Bureau" perfectly captures this struggle between allowing fate to unfold and actively intervening.

### **Pros/Cons Analysis: Open vs. Close the Door**

#### **Opening the Door: The "Adjustment" Action**

##### **Pros**

- **Empowerment:** You are acting as a facilitator, not a controller. You're giving LC a tool—AL's contact information—so that he can make his own choices and pursue his own dreams. This aligns with your philosophy of not "swiping left/right," as you're not making the choice for him; you are simply providing a connection.
- **Fulfillment of a "Helper" Role:** Your life pattern seems to involve being a catalyst for positive change in others. Providing this connection aligns with that pattern and likely provides you with a sense of purpose and satisfaction.
- **Potential for Positive Impact:** LC could receive valuable advice and mentorship from AL, which might accelerate his immigration process and help him avoid common pitfalls. The minimal action on your part could lead to a significant, positive outcome for him.
- **Alignment with Your Values:** Your opposition to "manipulating a non-adjustment" is a powerful reason to act. By not providing the contact, you might feel you're actively preventing a beneficial connection from happening, which would be a form of manipulation in itself.
- **The Power of Connection:** In a world where genuine connections are rare, you are creating one. This could lead to a friendship between AL and LC that benefits both of them, regardless of the immigration outcome.

##### **Cons**

- **Unintended Consequences:** By introducing AL and LC, you cannot control what happens next. They might not get along, or the interaction could lead to complications you can't foresee. This is the core "Adjustment Bureau" trap—you can't be sure your intervention will lead to a good outcome.
  - **Emotional Burden:** If things go wrong, you might feel a sense of responsibility or guilt. You could be pulled into their dynamic, becoming a go-between or a source of conflict if they have disagreements.
  - **Breaching Boundaries:** While you know both individuals, you don't know if AL is open to being contacted by strangers, especially for a mentorship role. You're making a judgment call on her behalf without her prior consent, which could be seen as a violation of her privacy.
  - **Creating False Hope:** What if the conversation with AL leads to no concrete help for LC? He might feel disappointed or misled, and you could feel responsible for that disappointment.
  - **Meddling in the "Plan":** This is the core of your own personal dilemma. By actively "adjusting" someone else's trajectory, you're stepping into a role you seem to be philosophically wary of. This action, while potentially benevolent, is a direct intervention in their life's path.
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## **Closing the Door: The "Non-Adjustment" Action**

### **Pros**

- **Respecting Boundaries and Privacy:** The most straightforward pro is that you are respecting both AL's and LC's potential boundaries. You don't have to assume they would want this connection. You are choosing not to take an action that could impose on either of them.
- **Avoiding Unnecessary Complications:** You are protecting yourself from the emotional burden and potential unintended consequences of their interaction. Your involvement ends at the pool, and your life remains uncomplicated by their future dynamic.
- **Encouraging Self-Reliance:** By not providing the contact, you are essentially challenging LC to find his own path. He can use other resources, research the

immigration process on his own, and develop his own network. This aligns with your "antifragility" philosophy for your former coworker.

- **Philosophical Purity:** You're adhering to your philosophical ideal of not meddling. You're letting destiny or fate run its course, believing that if LC is meant to succeed, he will find the right way without your direct intervention.
- **Preserving the Integrity of the Encounter:** The conversation at the pool was special because it was a random, organic interaction. By not acting on it, you're preserving that moment as it was—a brief, meaningful exchange, rather than a transaction.

## Cons

- **The Regret of a Missed Opportunity:** You might always wonder what would have happened if you had made the connection. This "what if" could linger and feel like a missed chance to do good.
- **Feeling of Inaction:** You're a person who acts on your convictions. Choosing not to act in this situation might feel like a failure to follow through on a deeply held belief that you can and should help others when you have the chance.
- **Ignoring a Natural Signal:** You've repeatedly experienced these "signals" in your life where you feel you can have a positive impact. To ignore this one would be a conscious break from a pattern you clearly find meaningful.
- **Moral Dilemma:** You have information that could genuinely help someone. Withholding it could be seen as selfish, especially if you have no valid reason other than a philosophical principle.
- **Not a True "Non-Adjustment":** Your very conversation with him has already made an "adjustment." By planting the seed of possibility (telling him about AL), you've already influenced his trajectory. Not giving him the number after that is also a form of an "adjustment"—it's an active decision to withhold a piece of information he now knows exists.

## Enlightenment

Your dilemma is less about a simple pros and cons list and more about your personal philosophy. The "Adjustment Bureau" serves as your guiding metaphor

because it perfectly illustrates your inner conflict: whether to be a passive observer of life's "plan" or an active participant who influences its course.

There is no objectively right answer here. The choice hinges on which philosophical principle you prioritize: **the duty to help others when you can** versus **the belief that every individual must forge their own path**. Your "swipe left/right" analogy is key. You see a clear distinction between a transactional, superficial connection and a genuine, earned one. Giving LC AL's number feels like the latter. You are not "swiping" to match them; you're simply providing a bridge that they can choose to cross or not.

The fact that you're so conflicted suggests that both paths—opening the door and closing it—are valid in your eyes. The "enlightenment" is recognizing that you have already created the potential for a "tiny life adjustment" simply by having the conversation. The action of giving the number is a secondary choice, but the primary **decision to engage with a stranger** has already been made. Now you must decide if your role as an "adjuster" is to simply point people in the right direction or to actively connect the dots for them.