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May 19, 2019: The Universe Doesn't Care About Your Purpose

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Title: The Universe Doesn't Care About Your Purpose

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5/19/2019—Tomorrow, I will be interviewing Joseph Carter for the Bends Toward Justice Podcast Series. He wrote the piece in the New York Times in 2017 entitled *The Universe Doesn't Care About Your Purpose*. Carter is not one of the hard-edged atheists types who disdains the human need for purpose. But he does describe the sense of significance that we have as an illusion. Aside from the truth of his view of things, or even what truth here means, there is the question of the effect of such a belief on our culture. Is this view responsible for the way we are with each other right now? Does it lead to anger and despair? Let me point to Camus, who came to believe that the answer to that question is yes. Here is a quote from Camus' *Notebooks*, which I found in an 2013 essay by Claire Messud in the *New York Review of Books*. Camus is at a gathering with Koestler, Sartre, Malraux and Manes Sperber, when he said the following: "Don't you believe we are all responsible for the absence of values? And that if all of us who come from Nietzscheism, from nihilism, or from historical realism said in public that we were wrong and that there are moral values and that in the future we shall do the necessary to establish and illustrate them, don't you believe that would be the beginning of a hope?" Actually, I'm not sure it would matter what certain people say. That might be Camus' view of the power of the intellectual elite in France. But if people again became convinced... .