

# Free will: It's a complicated thing, but comes down to how you play your hand

*"Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will."* – Jawaharlal Nehru

"Live Free or Die," the Granite State motto first emblazoned on the back of a coin, and then on license plates since 1971, dates back to 1809, and a letter written by Gen. John Stark, New Hampshire's most celebrated American Revolutionary hero who led the American rebels in the Battle of Bennington. Thirty-two years later, unable to attend a reunion, the veteran penned a letter in lieu of his presence, adding the toast to his troops about the price and cost of freedom: "Live free or die. Death is not the greatest of evils."

What, exactly, is free will? In the 1980s, neuroscien-



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tists optimistically entered the field of brain research to unravel their understanding of the origins of actions in the brain that express free will. Three decades later, they have reached the same conclusion as the philosophers, namely, that free will is a complicated thing, far more complex than originally anticipated.

