

Austin Academic

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### A Lesson Learned on the River

“Let's take a bigger boat like the other guys,” my friend, Ethan, suggested as we approached the river. It was a hot summer day, as we made our way to the Flaming Gorge River with a group of young men, all excited about the adventure ahead.

But I had other ideas. “No way, we've been rafting before. We're going to take a smaller boat and challenge ourselves,” I replied with a grin.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?” Ethan asked, his voice slightly trembling.

“We'll be fine. We're going to speed past the bigger boats, no question,” I assured him.

As we paddled down the river, the freezing-cold water splashed against our faces, and we could feel the spray on our skin. Under the hot sun, the icy cold only seemed refreshing. We laughed and joked with the other boys, but there was an underlying sense of nervousness and anticipation as we approached the rapids.

“This is insane,” Ethan exclaimed as we approached the first set of rapids.

“Just hold on tight and follow my lead,” I replied, trying to sound confident.

The sound of the rushing water grew louder, and we could see the waves crashing ahead of us.

“Alright, Ethan, let's do this!” I shouted, trying to sound brave.

Seeing as our boat was quicker than the larger ones, we hit the rapids first. But it wasn't long before our boat quickly filled with water. Ethan and I frantically bailed out the water, but it was a losing battle.

“What do we do now?” Ethan shouted, his voice full of panic.

“We have to stop and empty the boat,” I replied, trying to keep calm.

After we emptied the boat, the larger boats had an advantage over us. It was apparent that the larger boats were able to navigate the rapids more easily and quickly, while we struggled to keep up despite our smaller boat's speed advantage.

“I think we're in over our heads, Austin. Maybe we should have taken a bigger boat like the others,” Ethan said with a hint of regret.

But I wasn't ready to give up. I had my pride at stake here. “No way, Ethan. We can do this. We just need to focus and work together.”

We paddled harder and focused on navigating the rapids more efficiently. We learned that if one of us was to focus on giving directions to the other then we were able to navigate the rapids much better.

“Paddle left, Ethan! Now right! Good job, keep it up!” I shouted, trying to keep us on track.

We learned to read the river, anticipating the waves, and adjust our paddling to avoid capsizing. We eventually caught up with the larger boats.

When the next set of rapids came, even though the boats the other boys manned, were larger and more stable, we were able to keep up and even pass them in the rapids because of our knowledge through perseverance.

It was a proud moment for us, and we felt a sense of accomplishment that we wouldn't have experienced if we had taken the easier route.

This experience taught me an invaluable lesson about life. While it's tempting to choose the faster, easier path, it's not always the best decision. The road less taken, the path of more resistance, can lead to greater success in the long run. We must be willing to take risks and face challenges if we want to achieve our goals.

Reflecting on the river rafting trip, I realized that it was more than just a fun adventure. It was a valuable learning experience that has stayed with me to this day. The sound of the rushing water, the feeling of the sun on my skin, and the thrill of the rapids are memories that I will always cherish.

But most importantly, the lesson I learned about the importance of choosing my path in life – not merely going with the flow -- is something that will guide me for years to come. I now appreciate the importance of perseverance, adaptability, and courage in the face of adversity.

Taking the easier, more stable route can lead to much success in life. However, being willing and able to take “the road less traveled” can often lead to much more grand and impressive results -- when it is approached with the right attitude of growth and perseverance.