

Always a Faster Boat

..... Traditional Buddhist Folktale

An eager student came to the shore of a river and was most anxious to get to the other side, where he believed the answers to all of life's questions can be found. The only problem was, the student did not have a boat to sail across and he could not swim.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a little rowboat. He waved his arms in the air and flagged the rowboat over. The people in the rowboat kindly stopped and picked him up, and he began to make his way across the river in the rowboat.

The student's excitement of getting to the other side of the shore quickly dissipated as the rowboat was slow moving; not to mention it was a lot of hard labor to row the boat. If only he could find a quicker way.

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No sooner had the student wished for a quicker way across the river than a sleek and beautiful sailboat appeared in the distance.

The student was captivated by the smooth efficiency of the sailboat and its progress across the river. He was also tired of the hard work of rowing.

So once again, the student waved his hands in the air, this time gesturing for the sailboat to pick him up. As the sailboat glided by, the student jumped from the rowboat to the sailboat to make his way across the river to the other side of the shore.

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The student's excitement grew. Surely he'd be to the other side of the shore in no time. The sailboat was much faster than the rowboat. In fact, they were already half way to the other side.

Just then the wind died down and the sailboat came to an abrupt halt. Without the wind to carry it, the sailboat started to move downstream, carried by the current.

The student was impatient with the turn of events. He began to frantically search for another boat he could ride upon.

Out in the distance he saw a boat charging his way. *Ah, a motorboat*, he thought, *surely this is the fastest and best way across the river*. And just as the motorboat passed by, he jumped on.

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No sooner had the student jumped on the motorboat than he became irritated by the noise and fumes of the motor. *At least he was making good time*, he thought.

Just then the motorboat ran out of gas and came to a halt. He looked around to see what boat might be available, but none this time were in sight. All he saw out in the far distance was the rowboat, slowly and surely making its way to the other side of the shore.

If only I had stayed on the rowboat, the student thought.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

We live in a hurried culture and we live our lives always wanting to be somewhere we aren't.

But, what if there wasn't anywhere else you were suppose to be? What if right now, in this moment, you were exactly where you were meant to be?

Allow yourself to arrive here with your breath...

DURING CLASS

Before Finishing the Story

Where in your practice are you trying to push through? Where are you checking the boxes to get to the next thing thinking it will bring you closer to where you want to go? Where can you instead settle into this moment as it is?

After Telling the Story

Quick fixes never provide absolute solutions. Jumping from one thing to the next, will never take us to where we want to go.

With patience comes magic....where can you trust your path, your practice, your journey?

CLOSING CLASS

The shortest path to get from where you are to where you want to be is traveled with steadfast determination and commitment.

What can you commit to this week? Where can you invest in the practice of making progress?

EXTRAS

Fast food. Fast cars. Fast working medicine. They're each potentially dangerous, yet they perfectly describe the mindset of our current society. When we are hungry, we want our food right now. Want the newest home décor or fashion? It can be on your doorstep within 24 hours without even leaving your house. If we are experiencing pain or any other physical symptoms, we go to the doctor in hopes of finding a magic pill that offers quick relief.

The issue with the quick-fix approach when it comes to your health and wellbeing is that it is not usually the healthiest option. When you reach for a medication that offers quick relief from your pain, the pain may subside for a time, but it typically returns since the root cause isn't dealt with. The same applies to many areas of life. Faster isn't always better.

Ask your students to think about the areas in their life where they're caught up in the "quick-fix" approach and to see where they can better invest their time and energy.