

Chapter 7.0: Trip Leadership ¹

This chapter is titled Trip Leadership. A general approach was utilized. It includes trip leader and guide leadership on commercial trips as well as on private trips. In this way it is more inclusive and consistent with the ACA materials. In terms of ACA materials, this chapter incorporates some of the topics listed under “Responsibilities of Captain (guide).”

Leadership begins with framing the experience for passengers. The flow model is used for this frame. Next, is a section on the pre-trip talk at the beginning of the trip. Third, this chapter discusses group management which involves managing rafts on the trip. This includes river running techniques. Fourth, there is a section of evaluating passenger comfort in the water. On a trip, this is important. In terms of a rafting instructional course, the throw bag drill is important in accomplishing this task for students.

The Experience

There are two distinctly different approaches toward creating the experience for participants.

Interestingly, both approaches have their roots in the same research. The discussion begins with the flow model and “*seeking mastery*.” With the introduction of perceived risks and a leader or guide who provides considerable knowledge, skills and experience to the activity, the second “*roller coaster experience*” approach emerges.

Seeking Mastery – A boater or for that matter anyone seeking mastery, attempts to bring all of their knowledge, skills and experiences to match the challenges present (Figure 7.1). Conceptually, the flow model suggests the relationship between the challenges present and the skills of the individual. Although Csikszentmihalyi didn’t focus on perceived risks in discussing the flow experience, a person seeking mastery seeks to minimize perceived risks because perceive risks potentially diminish the matching process of the skills to the challenges. Or, perhaps better stated, they modify the relationship. This should become apparent in the next section on the Adventure Experience

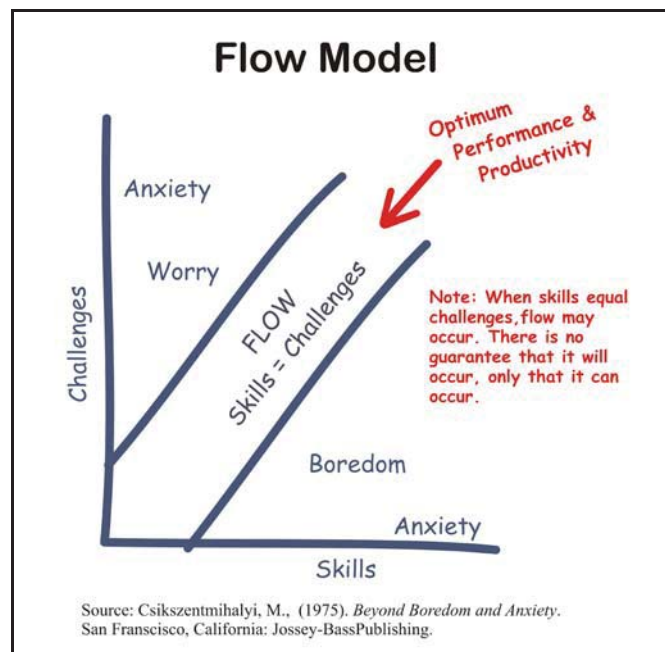


Figure 7.1: Flow Model – In the flow model, the participant seeks to match their skills with the challenges present. Their knowledge, skills and experience help them to create this match. Source: Csikszentmihalyi – [file:\RK-Flow.cdr]

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Paradigm.

Typically, surfing a wave, making a precise eddy turn, or making another maneuver is an art form where the boater matches the challenge of the maneuver with their ability to perform the maneuver. Mastery is the ability to find the fine line between challenges and skills. In terms of the flow model, flow can occur when this happens. Flow may or may not occur, only that it *can* occur. The boater knows when it occurs because according to flow methodology, typical symptoms of a flow experience include a merging of the activity and experience, a loss of external reality, and a oneness with the experience. A classic symptom of not being in a flow experience is consciously thinking about and analyzing what he/she is doing to obtain it. In this situation, the boater is viewing the activity externally and the flow experience is not occurring.

Athletes and boaters seeking mastery require, knowledge, skill and experience. Practice and experience provides the boater with the ability and skill to be able to find the edge and to place the boat and boater in a kinesthetic dance with the moving water. Over time, the athlete and boater increase their skills and this ratchets up the challenges to correspond with the new skills developed. It is a process of skill development and seeking mastery of the activity.

It is worth noting the other position in the flow model. If the challenges greatly exceed the skills, anxiety occurs and if they mildly exceed the skills, worry occurs. On the bottom of the graph, if skills greatly exceed the challenges, anxiety will occur and if they mildly exceed the challenges, boredom occurs.

Adventure Experience Paradigm (AEP) – Developed by Priest and Gass (1997), the Adventure Experience Paradigm incorporates a generic flow model embedded in the

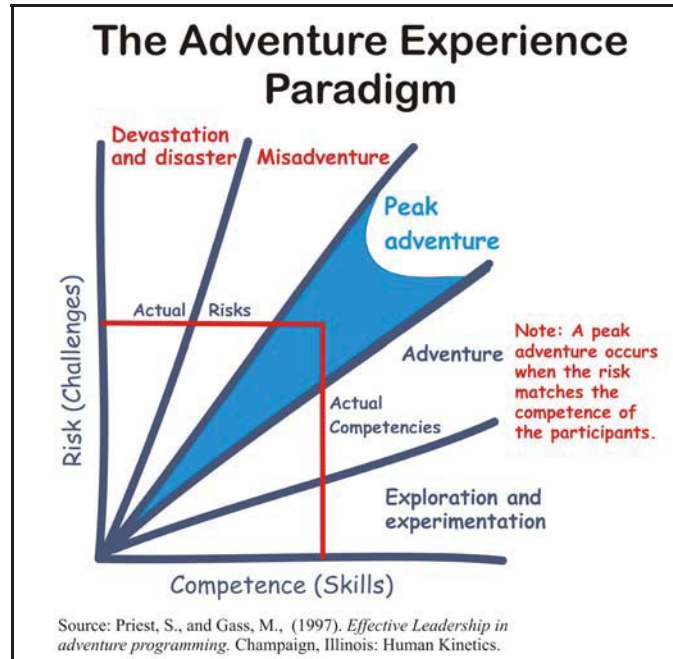


Figure 7.2: Adventure Experience Paradigm(AEP) – Caption: The AEP embeds the flow model into it to create a peak adventure where the risks and challenges match the competencies and skills of the participants. Source: Priest and Gass – [file:\RK-AdvenExperParadigm.cdr].

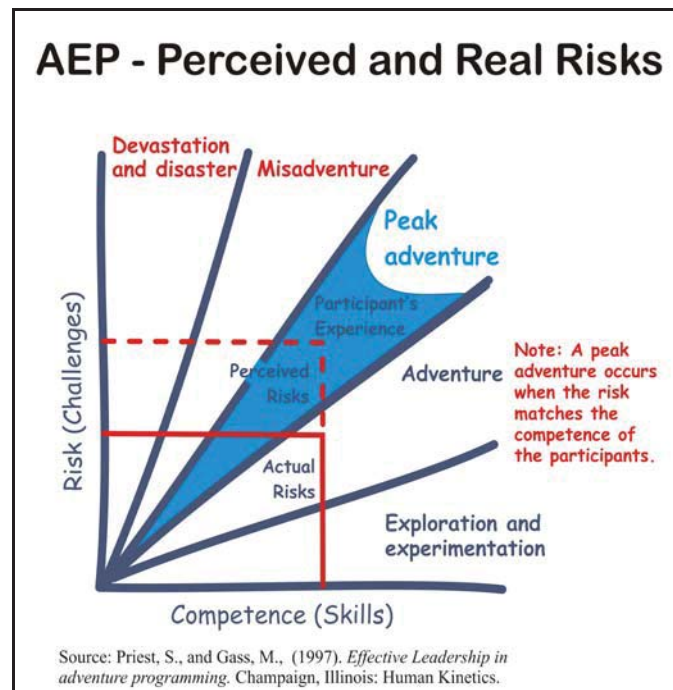


Figure 7.3: AEP - Perceived Risks – Caption: Instead of matching actual risks and challenges to provide a peak experience, perceived risks and challenges are provided to create a peak adventure. It returns to a variation of the roller coaster. Source: Priest and Gass – [file:\RK-AdvenExperParadigm3.cdr].

paradigm (Figure 7.2). From a programming perspective, the paradigm is foundational. There are two significant differences from the flow model. The flow model focuses on the individual. The AEP introduces a leader or programmer who facilitates the experience. Second is the introduction of perceived risks and perceived competencies.

As in the flow model, the programmer seeks to match the challenges and risks present in the activity with the skills and competencies of the participants. A peak adventure occurs when the two are matched or are in equilibrium. A misadventure and devastation and disaster occur when the risks and challenges greatly exceed the competencies and expectations of the participants. Providing activities in this range can easily lead to participant dissatisfaction and can eventually lead to being sued. If the competencies and skills exceed the challenges, an “adventure” and “exploration and experimentation” experience can occur.

Since the leader or programmer brings considerable knowledge, skills and experience to the activity, their ability can easily compensate for the lack thereof on the part of the participant. Or with the introduction of perceived risks and challenges, the leader or programmer can create a peak adventure while at the same time reduce actual risks (Figure 7.3). This makes the activity safer. This describes the roller coaster experience discussed in the next section.

In the case of raft guides, the guide increases perceived risks while reducing or managing actual risks. Choosing the designated or standard route through a rapids is an example of reducing actual risks. Making it an exciting run increases the perceived risks and challenges. It is the application of the roller coaster experience to create the desired experience while making the activity safer also.

Pseudo 4 – As an important sidebar to this discussion, the participant can have perceived competence or perceived skills. A “pseudo-4” is a person who believes they have the skill and ability when they don’t. It is based on the Hershey (1984) *The Situation Leadership* and (Kauffman, 2011). In the model, the leader is in the *delegate phase* where they have the ability to do the task and they have the motivation or willingness to do it. In terms of a guided raft trip, the passengers have just successfully negotiated big rapids and whitewater. They are willing and motivated to run whitewater and it is easy for them to believe they have the skill to do it when they really don’t. They don’t realize that they successfully negotiated the river due to the ability of the guide. Hence, the “pseudo-4.” The simple solution is to remind passengers not to try river running without the guidance of a trained guide.

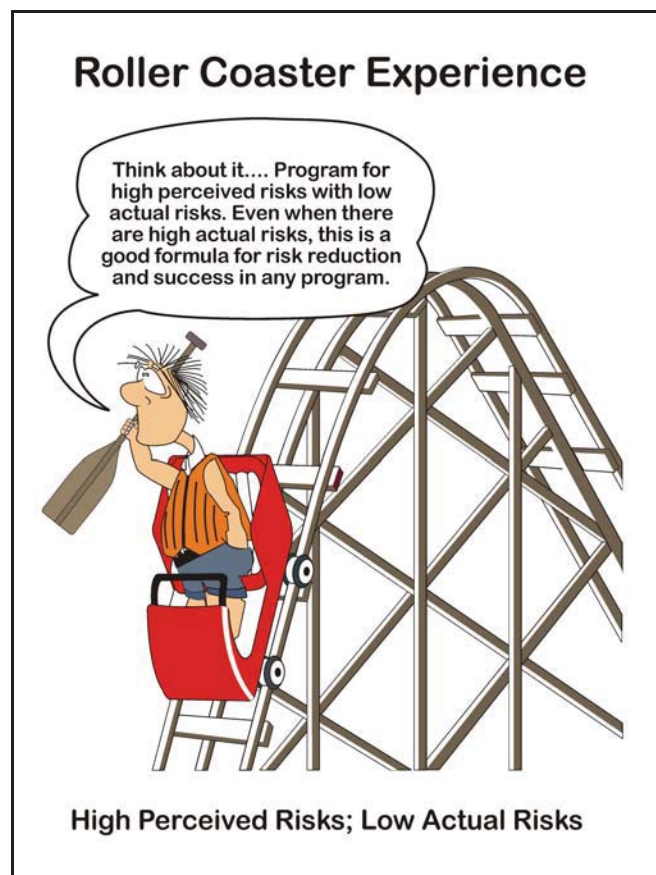


Figure 7.4: The Roller Coaster – When designing an experience, think of a roller coaster. It minimizes actual risks and increases perceived risks. Source: author – [file:\PHIL-RollerCoaster.cdr]

Roller Coaster Experience (Figure 7.4) – Perceived risks and challenges and the reliance upon a leader or programmer for participant skills are the factors behind the roller coaster experience. Quite simply in terms of the AEP, the leader or programmer seeks to enhance the experience by increasing perceived risk while at the same time reducing and managing actual risks. It provides a peak experience that is safer at the same time.

Consider the roller coaster. It is high on perceived risk and low (hopefully low) on actual risk. The roller coaster is inspected daily. The probability of a person getting on a roller coaster having a successful ride is fairly high. The roller coaster rides on a track. There are safety devices to keep people safely within the coaster. The ride is designed to minimize actual risk. When was the last time a roller coaster came off the track? It is designed to create high perceived risks with low actual risks.

As a matter of practice, an adventure sports programmer wants to create a roller coaster type experience by decreasing actual risks and increasing perceived risk. Yes, there are risks in running rivers. Nevertheless, the guide seeks to reduce the actual risks while maximizing perceived risks.

For the raft guide or adventure sport's programmer, the roller coaster is a good model to utilize. Although the actual risks can't be eliminated to the extent of an actual roller coaster, they can be minimized. The guide takes the designated route. It is as if the boat is on a set of rails, much like a roller coaster. Taking a designated or standard route consistently reduces risks. In addition, the trip avoids high water levels. At the same time the guide can increase perceived risks. This can be done verbally or by purposely brushing against rocks to create the perception of greater risks by the participants. It is the roller coaster experience which minimizes actual risks while increasing perceived risks.

Raft Trip from Hell (Figure 7.5) – The previous discussion discussed the concept of matching the skills to the challenges of the participants to create an optimum adventure experience. Although it may seem obvious, in practice, it may not be an easy thing to do.

On September 30, 2004, a group of employees from a major company in the Washington metropolitan region participated in a team building exercise on the Shenandoah River near Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The raft trip down the Shenandoah River was one of the major components of the program. The river was at flood. Several of the rafts flipped and one of the passengers drowned on the trip. The following passages were taken from the deposition of one of the participants who participated in that team building experience (Figure 7.5). As the title suggests, this trip turned out to be the raft trip from Hell for the participants.

It was a classic example of the company (i.e. guides) not matching the experience provided with the experience delivered. The river was up. They ran it at flood because it was where they were at, not where their passengers were at. In terms of the adventure paradigm, it became a “devastation and disaster” experience. Although there was a settlement regarding the deceased, the other participants sued for mental damages. They didn't win their case for damages. Regardless, the experience they had is not the experience most professional guides want their passengers to have after a day of rafting.

Figure 7.5: Raft Trip from Hell

Q: Plaintiff's Lawyer
A: "Jane Doe"

Excerpts from Deposition of [xxxx xxxxxxx]

Page 33:

18 A. I remember feeling the boat shift. I
19 remember the boat flipping over, myself being thrown
20 into the water. I remember the water was very rough,
21 waves, a lot of waves, being pushed down deep into the
22 water. I remember gulping in a lot of water right
23 away and then came up (Crying) - - excuse me. I

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1 remember coming back up underneath the raft,
panicking
2 because I felt like I wasn't getting enough air. It
3 was very difficult to get - - to get some air and to
4 go - - I was pushed back down again several times, so
5 I was taking in a lot of water.
6 And I remember came - - coming up under
7 the raft, trying to get some air and I couldn't. And
8 I remember thinking if I'm going to get out of this, I
9 have to get from underneath the boat. So I remember
10 trying to - - when I got pushed down again, trying to
11 force myself to swim - - swim backwards to try and
get
12 from underneath the boat - -
(page 33 line 18-23; page 34 line 1-12)

Page 47:

10 Q. In your interrogatory answers, you note that
11 you have nightmares and flashbacks and difficulty
12 going into the ocean and, you know, general mental
and
13 emotional suffering and anguish. Why don't you
14 explain to me that claim or those claims?
15 A. Right, well I have a severe fear of deep
16 water now. I - -
17 Q. Let me ask you something: what do you
18 consider "deep water"?
19 A. Anything taller than myself.
20 Q. Okay.
21 A. It was - - right away, it was very difficult
22 to deal with water at all, feeling of having water
23 splashed in my face reminded me of the - - of the

Page 48:

1 event. I've been in situations where I've been on
2 vacation since where I've had panic attacks when
3 having to, you know, go in - - in the ocean, near the
4 ocean or dealing with any kind of boats. I no longer
5 want to - - no longer like being on a boat or being
6 any - - near any rivers such as the river we were in.
7 I had a lot of anxiety about the event that
8 happened, feelings that I could have died. I was
9 supposed to sit in the seat that Roger sat in at the
10 front of the boat. That could have been myself. I
11 felt that I - - could have drowned that day.
(page 47 line 10-23; page 48 line 1-11)

Source: River Riders Inc., v Cathy Freeman, et al.(2007). Deposition of [xxxx xxxxxxx], Circuit Court of Jefferson County, West Virginia, October 18.

Pre-trip Talk

If a rafter is taking passengers in their raft, it is important to do a pre-trip talk-up. This includes private trips as well as commercial trips. On a private trip, the pre-trip talk-up has several benefits. It provides an overview of the experience on the river and what is expected of the passengers (i.e. crew). Don't assume the passengers know what "high siding" is. It provides them with safety procedures in case they fall out or if there is another mishap. It allows the captain to cover the commands that they can expect to use to maneuver the boat. It helps them to feel comfortable in the boat and that the captain (guide) are in charge and know what they are doing. The pre-trip talk can occur on land, in the water, or both.

Commercial trips will usually break the pre-trip talk into an onshore and in-the-boat talk. The pre-trip talk is usually done as a group. Due to lawsuits, it has taken on an importance and formality not afforded other river activities. There are examples where the pre-trip talk has been videotaped or a guide has a check-off list to insure that all the topics were covered by the presenters.

The in-the-boat talk is usually done by each raft guide. Its focus is on strokes, commands and other specific skills the passengers will need to become a cohesive team while under the command of the guide.

For our rigs, the pre-trip talk up will have a slightly different focus since there is no need to cover paddle strokes and commands. However, most of the other topics are included.

Regarding this section, the following disclaimer is noted. The topics are suggestions and do not constitute an industry standard. Each group needs to use these suggestions as a foundation and build upon them to meet the specific needs of their situation. As noted with the oar rigs, some topics may not be included.

Introduction (Figure 7.6)– The purpose of the introduction is to introduce yourself, other guides if appropriate, and that it is going to be a fun day on the river. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- Who you are and your role.
- Introduce the other guides and their role on the trip (e.g. lead and sweep).
- Provide an overview of the river, its difficulty, and what they can expect on the river.
- What is expected from the passengers.
- Emphasize that it will be a fun trip and the pre-trip talk will help to make it a fun trip!

Experience (Figure 7.7) – As a general rule, the guide wants to match the experience sought by the passengers with that provided. Be realistic in describing the experience in terms of its physical and mental requirements. Look for any excessive apprehension in passengers and address it. It may be necessary to do this in private and it may be appropriate for the passenger not to go on the trip. Many fatalities begin with customers who intuitively don't want to go on the trip and they continue with the trip when they really shouldn't.

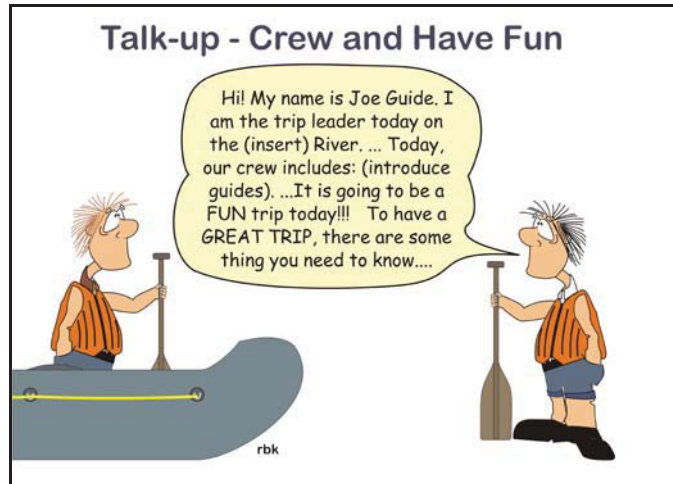


Figure 7.6: Pre-trip Introduction – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]



Figure 7.7: The Experience – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]

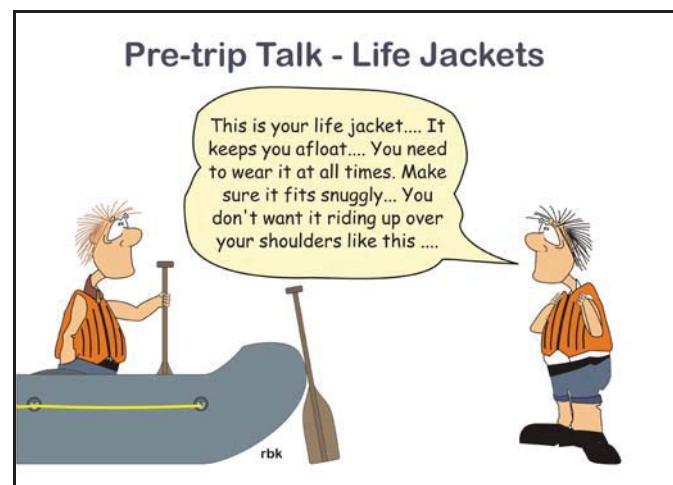


Figure 7.8: Life Jackets – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]

Solutions may include putting the passenger in a strong raft or pulling them from the trip. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- Provide an overview of the river, its difficulty, and what they can expect on the river.
- Provide what the passengers are expected to do on the trip today.
- Indicate the degree of physical exertion required and if there are any medical or health considerations that the guide needs to know.

Life Jackets

(Figure 7.8) – Most companies use Type V PFDs which require the life jacket to be worn to meet the Coast Guard carriage requirements. They are not much different than the Type III life jackets. For passengers, it is important for them to know when they need to be worn and how they should be fitted correctly. It is important for the guide to inspect the fitting of each passenger's life jacket. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- Indicate when it needs to be worn... Answer: At all times on the river.
- Emphasize that it needs to fit snugly.
- Guides will check the fit. It is important for the guide to inspect the fitting of each passenger's life jacket.
- If you fall out of the raft, the life jacket will help to keep your head above water and breath.

Paddles

(Figure 7.9) – Paddles can be dangerous. They should not be used for splashing other paddlers. Many people have been injured by paddles. Regarding splashing, treat it like any other activity with rules regarding its conduct and with specialized equipment designed to spray other people. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- How to hold the grip and throat of the paddle
- Always hold on to the grip
- Paddles can cause injury
- Absolutely no splashing of other passengers with paddles ... It is dangerous.

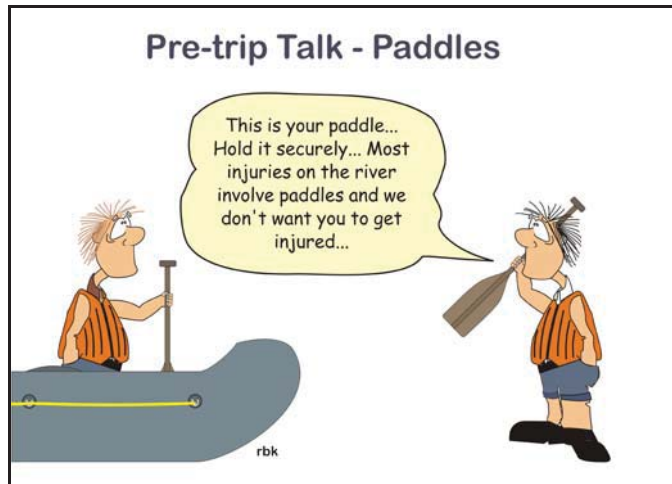


Figure 7.9: Paddles – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]

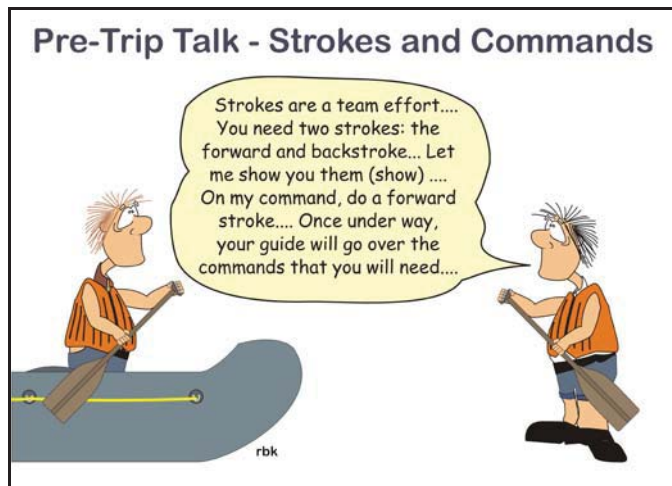


Figure 7.10: Strokes and Commands – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]

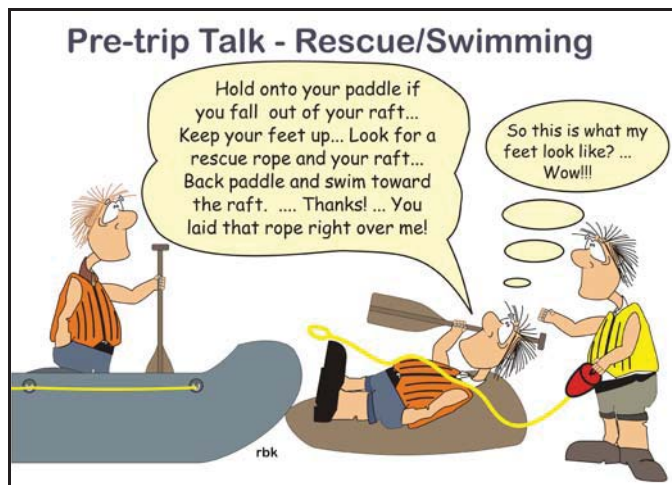


Figure 7.11: Rescue/Swimming – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]

Strokes and Commands (Figure 7.10) – Often the strokes and commands are covered by the specific guides when they have their crews assembled in their boats. Each guide has the task of getting the crew to respond as a team under the guide’s commands. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- Passengers need to know two strokes: forward and backstrokes.
- Basic stroke commands.
- High-side command.

Rescue/Swimming (Figure 7.11) – Each river will have general procedures regarding rescue whether it is from shore or from rafts. For example, a trip using the “follow-the-leader” approach will tend to use boat rescues. In contrast, trips using the eddy hopping approach may emphasize shore based rescue. Either way, passengers need to know what to expect. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- Show active and passive swimming
- Swim toward your raft
- When to look for a rope from the shore
- Remember to keep your feet up!
- How to breath in the waves

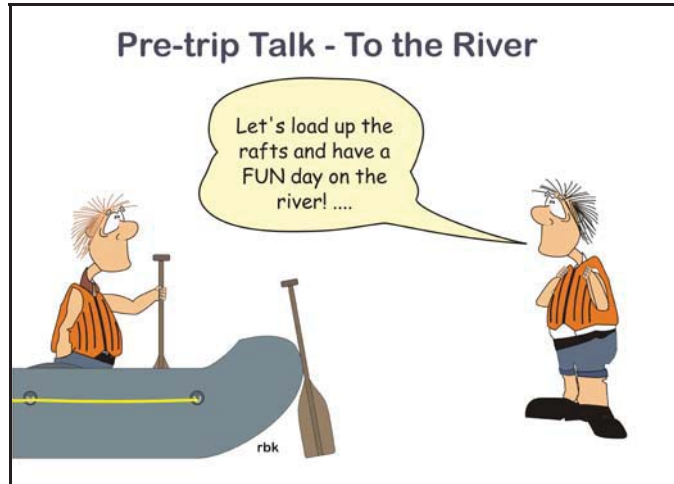


Figure 7.12: To the River – Source: Author [file: \LDR-PreTripTalk.cdr]

To the River (Figure 7.12) – This is the conclusion. It should be short and the group needs to move to the river. Some pointers to consider are listed below.

- Kept the talk short or you will lose the audience
- There maybe points that need to be covered for liability purposes. Know what they are and make sure that you cover them.
- Try inserting some humor...

But keep it clean and politically correct and not at the expense of anyone.

- Emphasize that it will be a fun day on the river?

Seating Arrangements

It is important for the guide to position passengers in the raft to optimize performance (Figure 7.13). This may include breaking up groups rafting together if necessary. Bennett (1999, p.40) notes three considerations for positioning people in the raft. These are 1) even strength determination, 2) even weight distribution, and 3) providing paddlers adequate room to paddle.

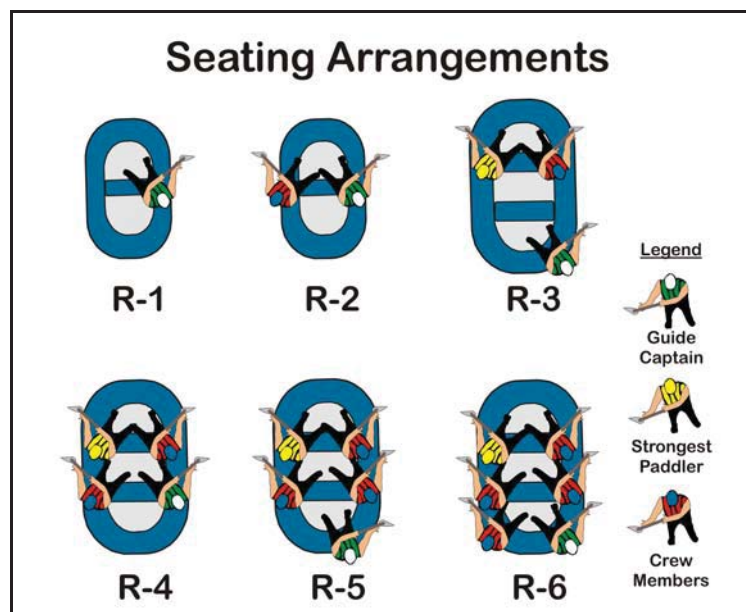


Figure 7.13: Seating Arrangements – Suggested seating arrangements are provided for R1 through R6 configurations. Source: author – [file:\LDR_Seating.cdr]

Suggested seating arrangements are provided in Figure 7.13 for R1 through R6 configurations. First, examination of the seating arrangements for R1 through R6 suggests relatively even weight distribution bow to stern (front to back). This will result in relatively good trim. Next, assuming the guide (right rear) is the strongest paddler, place the next strongest paddler (yellow helmet) in the front left to help counter the guide's strong strokes. Also, both bow paddlers should be strong paddlers and their role is to help set the cadence and rhythm of the other paddlers.

Generally, the weakest paddler is placed in the rear next to the guide. Guides with passengers who are fearing of whitewater but who are still on the trip anyway will find this a good location for these passengers. This enables the guide to monitor them, calm them, and chat with them. Also, they feel safer sitting next to the guide. There is one other feature of having them sit here. They are the most likely to fall out of the raft. On more than one occasion, this author has reached over, grabbed them by the life jacket, and kept them from falling into the water. If they were sitting elsewhere in the raft, they would fall into the water.

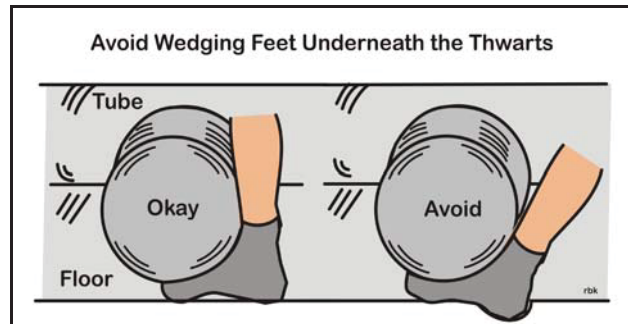


Figure 7.14: Throw Bag Drill – Excessive wedging of feet underneath the tubes can lead to paddler harm. Source: author – [file:\EQUIP_FootTubes.cdr]

Boaters like to be part of the raft. If there are foot cups, use them. Often rafts are outfitted with two foot cups in the bow only. Paddlers in the middle and rear of the raft will often wedge their foot under the tube. Although this is perfectly okay, caution should be taken not to wedge the foot under the tube that prevents easy extrication (Figure 7.14). If the foot becomes stuck, passengers can sprain or break their ankles if they were to fall out of the raft or if it were to flip. The guide should check for foot placement of passengers underneath the tubes as part of their normal routine.

Launching the Raft

In addition to the general pre-talk, the guide or leader needs to prepare the group for launching. On commercial trips, people usually sort themselves into rafts by the group with which they came. Although this approach is usually okay, there are times when there may be necessary to add people from other rafts to strengthen a crew. This may mean that initial groups are separated. Additional tasks in preparing to launch include checking safety items, training the crew, seating arrangements, guiding commands, training the crew, and launching.

Before launching, the guide should check life jackets, helmets if used, throw rope, spare paddle and the inflation of tubes. These topics have been covered elsewhere and are not included here again. Regarding life jackets, the guide should check the crew's life jackets to make sure they fit snugly. Recheck the inflation of the tubes, particularly if someone else inflated them. Top them off if needed.

In terms of common practices and procedures, each launch site is different. In general, make sure the crew is seated securely and the guide or captain launches the raft. Check to see that the site is clear of other rafts that might collide with your raft. If part of a group make sure your launch is between the lead and sweep boat. Often, rafts will launch and the group will collect themselves in an eddy downstream. Again, know what the common practices are for the launch site and your group.

Training Your Crew

The following points are taken from a handout by the author (Kauffman, 2014). Usually, the commands used by the captain of the raft are individualized in the sense that each captain tailors his commands to what is comfortable for him (Figure 7.13). This is fine. It is important to train your crew, be directive, simplify your commands, and be consistent in their use. Consider the following pointers.

Be directive

– In general, you are dealing with people who have little or no concept regarding river reading and paddling. In general, this requires the captain to be directive. Being directive is telling the passengers specifically what to do (“give me two forwards on the right”) and when they need to do it (“get ready for a critical move....”).

Simplify your commands

– For some, the command of “left turn” may be too complicated. It may require the paddlers to think what they need to do. In contrast “back one left” is simpler and more direct. Also, keep your strokes simple and usually all the passengers need to use are the forward and backstrokes.

Be consistent

– Be consistent with your commands. If you use “back one left” and “forward one right” than don’t use “left turn.” First, it requires them to think (i.e. The “left turn” command requires them to think whether they should do a backstroke or a forward stroke?). However, if you train your crew to the “left turn” command, then by all means use it. Just be cautious not to mix commands.

Call out the strokes

– One technique that synchronizes the paddlers in your boat is to call out the cadence with “stroke, stoke, stroke....” This establishes the cadence and synchronizes all the paddlers. Also, it is directive.

Figure 7.13: Commands for the Crew

Commands – Adapt and modify the commands to your needs. Practice your commands with your crew so that they know exactly what to do upon your command. The following is a list of some typical commands. They are presented as a suggestion. Individualize the commands to your specific needs and comfort level.

- **All forward**
- **All forward** – (call out the strokes with “stoke, stoke, stoke”)
- **All forward two strokes** – (call out the number of strokes)
- **All reverse**
- **All reverse two strokes** – (call out the number of strokes)
- **Back one left, forward one right** – (left turn) (call out the number of strokes)
- **Back one right, forward one left** – (right turn) (call out the number of strokes)
- **Half-back left** – (football pun intended) (with no right side command)
- **Half-back right** – (football pun intended) (with no left side command)
- **High Side**

Source: Kauffman, R., (2014). Rafting Manual. Unpublished handout.

Timing Tip

– There is a lag time between when you give a command and when the crew performs the stroke. If you are used to paddling by yourself, there is no lag time. With a crew, you will find that you will need to give your command a second or two before you need the actual move. It is an easy adjustment to make for those who are used to paddling by themselves.

Potpourri of Topics Covered – When training the crew, additional topics covered include strokes, maneuvers, high siding, and what to do when falling out of the raft. These topics are covered elsewhere in depth.

Group Management

In part, group management is an issue of supervision. In terms of conducting an activity, there are three types of supervision: general, specific and transitional supervision (Kauffman and Moiseichik, 2013, p.18). **General supervision** means that the leader must be in the activity area and overseeing the activity. This would favor keeping everyone in sight of everyone else on the trip. **Specific supervision** means that the leader has hands-on involvement in the activity. Handling a pinned raft or administering first aid are examples. **Transitional supervision** occurs when the leader moves from general to specific supervision or from specific to general supervision. On a river, this is not always an easy thing to do. Also, it requires positioning oneself strategically and involves the river running techniques.

Group management is divided into three components. First, this section discusses river running strategies from the perspective of the principles of supervision. The principles of supervision provide the rubric for the discussion of the other topics. Next, it discusses the roles of the lead, sweep and rover rafts. This is followed by a discussion of maintaining visual contact and spacing. Last, three river running approaches are discussed. These are: follow the leader, eddy hopping and leap frogging. These approaches are river dependent where the topography of the river will suggest the approach.

Lead, Sweep and Rover – Generally, there are three trip roles. These roles are the lead raft, sweep and rover. The **lead raft** has the following responsibilities. It sets the travel pace for the group. The lead raft should know the route which makes it easy for the other rafts to “follow the leader.” Normally, the other rafts do not pass the lead raft. This does not include leap frogging or eddy hopping situations. Often, the lead raft is the trip leader, but this need not be the case.

The **sweep raft** brings up the rear of the trip. Generally, it has the following responsibilities. Normally, the sweep carries the first aid kit. The sweep should be one of the most skilled boaters since they need to be able to access most anywhere on the river in order to affect a rescue. As with the lead, other boats need to stay in front of the sweep. As with the lead, there are organized situations such as leap frogging or eddy hopping where the sweep may not technically be the last boat. Usually, the trip leader is not the sweep. Regardless, it is the responsibility of the sweep to bring up the rear and to provide assistance to anyone in trouble anywhere on the river.

A **rover** roves from the beginning to the end of the trip. This position is optional. Often the trip leader will utilize this role since it provides good general supervision. There are several good reasons why it is not advantageous that trip leader is not the lead raft. If the trip leader needs to transition to specific supervision, the trip leader as lead raft is no longer lead. This requires everyone else to stop or someone else to assume the lead role. As a rover, the trip leader can setup safety at the bottom of a drop and move into position to assist rescue if needed.

Maintaining Visual Sight – Generally, there are two approaches to maintaining visual sight and general supervision of other boats on the trip. The first keeps everyone in the sight of everyone else. This is the favored strategy. There are specific situations where keeping visual contact with the boat in front and back is used. However, it is flawed as a general river running strategy. These strategies are discussed below.

<c>**Everyone Keeps Everyone Else in Visual Sight** – The lead boat keeps the sweep boat in sight and the sweep boat keeps the lead boat in sight. Every boat is in sight of every other boat. Since everyone is in visual sight of everyone else, general supervision is easily maintained. Since the sweep boat traditionally carries the first aid kit, transitional supervision is facilitated because the sweep boat can access downstream boats. Categorically, follow-the-leader river running exemplifies keeping everyone in sight and general supervision.

Boaters are quick to point out that there are times on the river where boats are out of sight of the other boat. This is true. When eddy hopping or leap frogging, one or more boats can temporarily be out of sight of the other boats. These situations are viewed as acceptable exceptions to the rule necessitated by the topography of the river. Regardless, as a general rule, boaters should seek to keep everyone in sight of everyone else knowing that there are situations when this is not possible.

<c>**Maintain Visual Sight of Boat Before and Boat Behind** (Figure 7.16) – Under this river running strategy, each boater is only required to keep the boat in front of them and the boat behind them in sight. There are times on the river when this method of supervision is acceptable or appropriate. However, as a general rule, this river running strategy is flawed because it doesn't maintain general supervision. In addition, it easily breaks down into a situation where boaters break the chain and lose sight of either the boat in front or behind them. One of the biggest reasons this strategy fails is because the rafters look forward at where they are going and they don't turn around and look behind them.

This river running strategy easily breaks down and is demonstrated in the Cheryl Taylor fatality on the New River in 1992. (Exhibit 8, 1992) Figure 7.16 is a frame captured from the video taken by the videographer accompanying the trip. The commercial rafting company practiced the principle of maintaining visual sight of the boat before and behind. The incident demonstrates how easily the chain can be broken. First, Joy's raft (trip leader and #2 raft) is leading the other rafts through Upper Keeney and eddying out behind Whale Rock. The spacing between rafts is good and except for Scott's raft, it is a tightly run trip through the rapids.

However, Scott got out in front of the group, dumped, and had several swimmers. He was ten to fifteen boat lengths ahead of the group. The visual chain was broken. The rest of the trip was unaware of his situation and they did not aid in the rescue until after running the rapids themselves. It could be argued that Joy did not have general supervision of the entire group and this resulted in her not being able to transition to specific supervision and aid Scott.

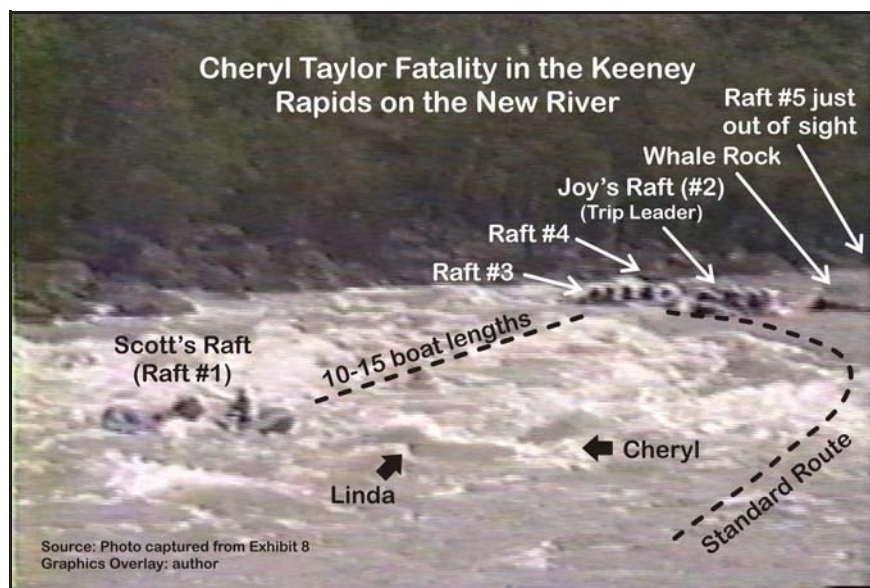


Figure 7.16: Spacing and Maintaining Visual Sight of Boats – The trip maintained good spacing but didn't maintain visual contact with all of the boats on the trip. A fatality resulted. Source: author – [file:\RR_TaylorIncident.cdr]

Spacing

 (Figure 7.16) – Spacing between rafts on a trip will vary with the situation. Delimiting the discussion to the follow-the-leader situation, boats need to be far enough apart that they aren't bumping into each other. However, they need to be close enough to render assistance to swimmers and other rescues. In addition, the group wants to keep all rafts in the group within visual sight. As a "thumb rule," a spacing of five to six boat lengths between boats is typical. As previously noted in Figure 7.16, there is good, tight spacing between Joy's raft and the two rafts behind it.

Follow-the-Leader

 (Figure 7.17) – Follow-the-leader is a standard river running technique on continuous drop rivers or on pool/drop rivers where the drops are not particularly significant in terms of hazards and rescue. As the name implies, the lead boat leads and the other boats follow. The sweep boat brings up the rear. In general, the sweep boat carries the first aid kit (i.e. if there is one first aid kit on the trip) since it is best suited to rescue other boats. This is because the sweep is following everyone else and in general, can reach other rafts more easily.

Eddy Hopping

 (Figure 7.18) – This is a standard river running technique. It has many variations based on river topography, the characteristics of the rapids, and the skill of the boaters. It is a standard river running technique on pool/drop rivers on rivers where there is a big drop, or where there is a major hazard.

In the simplest form of eddy hopping, the lead or sweep runs the drop first and sets up safety in the eddy below the drop. Everyone else follows one at a time or in single file with good spacing between boats. The lead boat is now the sweep and it goes last. The process is repeated at the next drop. In river running, this approach is used countless times. From this approach, the setup can become as sophisticated as needed and as described in the four steps below. On the Upper Yough, this approach is used on rapids such as Bastard Falls and Triple Drop. The following steps are as follows.

<c>**Step #1: Everyone Eddies Out above Drop** – Everyone eddies out above the drop. Often, the group will get out and scout the rapids. Scouting has its pluses and minuses. It is useful when guides or those running the rapids are unfamiliar with the rapids. Also, it has psychological value for passengers and increases their excitement and apprehension. On the minus side, it is often difficult to transfer the view from the side of the river to a river view. Also, it takes time. In terms of apprehension, sometimes it is simply easier to run the rapids, particularly when the guides know the route.

<c>**Step #2: Setup Safety** – Setting up safety can occur one of several ways. Often the lead or sweep boat will run the drop and setup safety. This approach is depicted in Figure 7.17. Safety may be either in boat or on the shore. Both are shown. In some cases, safeties will portage, setup safety and then return and run the rapids. This provides safety for everyone including the sweep boat. Often, the safety is also the trip leader or the person on the trip responsible for evaluating the performance of guides. Positioned below the drop, this person can easily observe and evaluate the runs of the other guides.

<c>**Step #3: Setup Communications and Command Structure** – Command structure involves determining who goes when through the rapids. Communications between guides accomplishes the command structure. Communications can be between the downstream and upstream raft using a whistle, paddle or hand signals. Often if there is a restricted view a guide may position himself where there is a view of the upstream eddy, drop, and downstream safeties. This guide orchestrates the rafts one by one through the rapids.

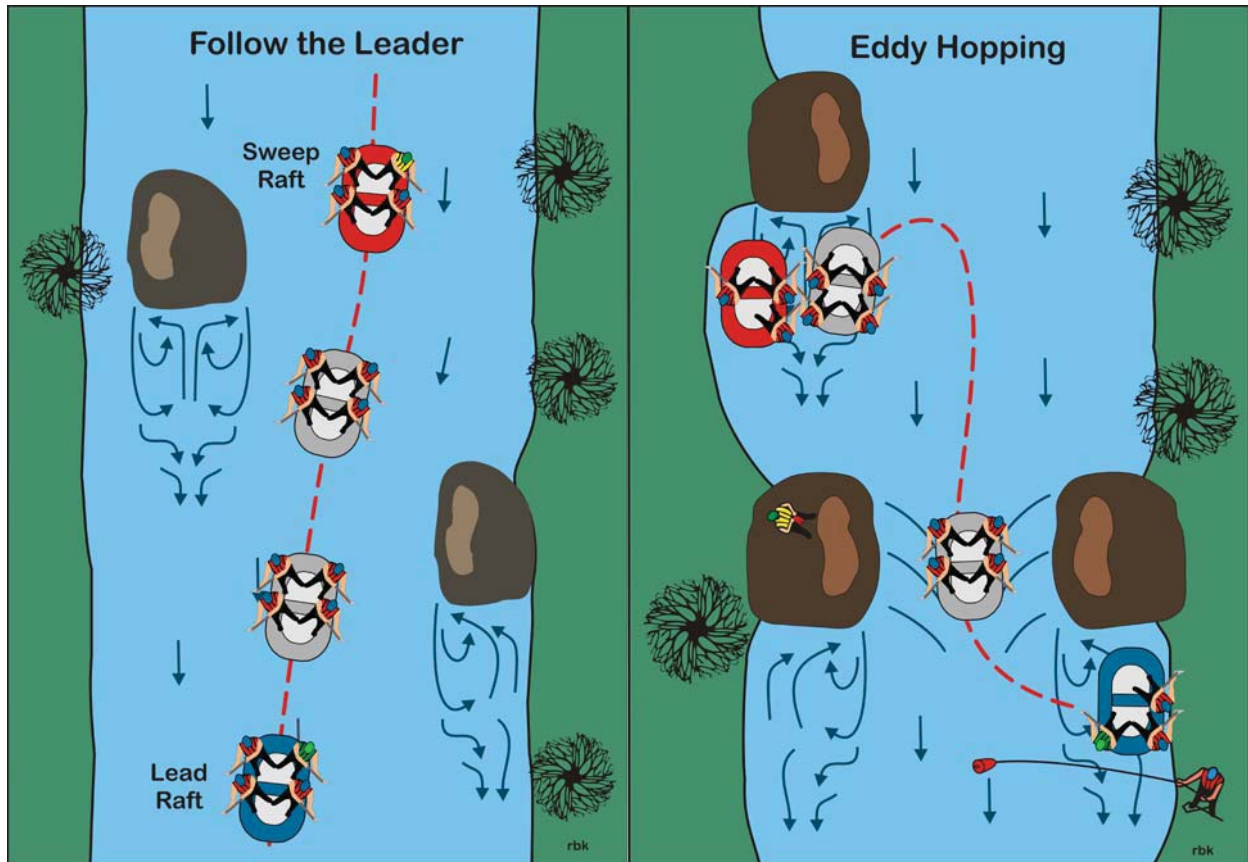


Figure 7.17: Follow-the-Leader –This method is used to run continuous drop or moderately pool/drop rivers. Source: author – [file:\RR_FollowLeader.cdr]

Figure 7.18: Eddy Hopping – Eddy hopping is a standard river running technique. The boats eddy out above the drop or hazard and then systematically run the drop and eddy out below it. Source: author – [file:\RR_EddyHopping.cdr]

<c>**Step #4: Last Raft Runs Drop** – The last raft runs the drop. This may be the lead or sweep boat. If there is a guide on the rock, he will generally be the last raft. With everyone downstream of the drop, the group proceeds down river.

Leap Frogging (Figure 7.19) – Leap frogging is an in between strategy between follow-the-leader and eddy hopping. When approaching a moderate drop, the sweep boat advances to the beginning of the trip, runs the drop, and then eddies out below the drop. The sweep provides safety and observes the other rafts passing through the drop. When the rest of the trip has run the drop, the sweep returns to the sweeping position. An advantage of this approach is that if the trip leader is also the sweep boat, the leader can evaluate the performance of the other boats.

When all the boats are traveling at the same speed, this approach is not always an easy method to use. This is the case where the entire group is comprised of rafts. It favors a hard boater (e.g. canoe or kayak) accompanying the trip where they can easily pass the group and advance to the front of the group. Usually, in a raft group, the trip will temporarily eddy out and the sweep boat will head through the drop and eddy out below the drop. The rest of the group follows quickly. Or the group can drift in the current and allow the sweep to overtake the group.

Evaluating Water Confidence of Passengers

Passengers should feel comfortable in the water. This is important for several reasons. It is assumed that passengers will eventually fall out of the raft. This can be for a host of reasons including simply losing balance and falling out of the raft, unstable footing in the bottom of the raft, and hitting a hole that dump trucks passengers into the water. Next, a swimmer who feels comfortable in the water can aid in their rescue. They can swim toward the raft, avoid obstacles in the river using defensive swimming, and grab a rope thrown to them.

Being able to swim in a swimming pool is a very different experience than swimming and feeling comfortable in swiftwater. Guides need to take this into account. Also, this is the professional opinion of this author and may not be universally shared. Swimming pools are a known body of water in terms of the sides and bottom. Its water is clear. In most places, a swimmer can stand up in a swimming pool and stand comfortably on the bottom. In fact, many people will confuse wading with swimming ability. Regardless, swimming in a swimming pool may indicate a certain level of comfort in the water.

Swimming in a river is a very different experience. The water is moving. There are obstacles with which to contend. Coordinating breathing in between waves can easily be disorientating. Couple this with the psychology of the unknown and it can easily lead to a disoriented and panicky passenger when in the water. The bottom line is that just because a person is a good swimmer in a swimming pool, don't assume they are a good swimmer in swiftwater.

Ask Them – Consider this the starting point. Ask the passengers who can swim and who can't. Usually, this will give the guide a good starting point. Look for hesitancy in responses. Also, there can be follow up questions such as swimming in a pool or at the beach. The beach is still wading, but it is wading in moving water.

Jump-off Rock or Water Activity - Many trips have a jump-off rock or other fun type activity where passengers are in the water. This provides a chance to evaluate who enters the water and who doesn't. Also, it provides an opportunity to evaluate people's behavior in or near the water. It should be noted that this evaluation can be performed informally and without the conscious knowledge of the passengers.

Although this author doesn't recommend jump-off rocks, the activity should be treated as any other activity in terms of its conduct and safety considerations. The site should be examined visually and with a paddle inserted into the water to make sure that there is sufficient depth and no obstacles. This needs to be

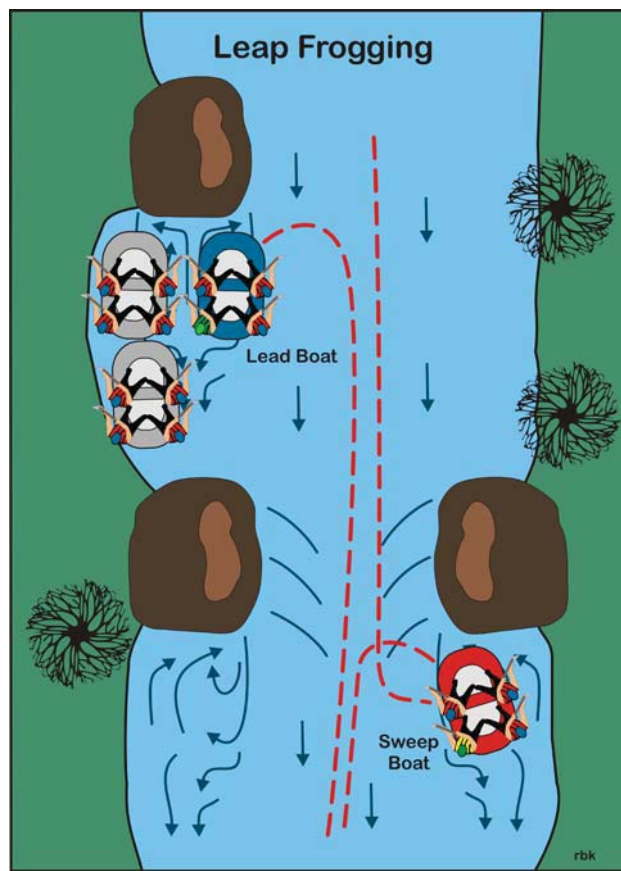


Figure 7.19: Leap Frogging –The sweep pulls ahead, eddies out, and sets up safety. The rest of the trip runs the rapids and the sweep returns to the sweep. Source: author – [file:\RR_LeapFrog.cdr]

done even if the site is used on a continuous basis. Debris can easily be swept into the site. There needs to be general and specific supervision of the activity. This includes a guide on the rock who supervises who jumps and when. There need to be rules. Everyone wears their life jacket and a guide checks it for fit. One person jumps at a time. There should be an evacuation plan from the site. Other practices and procedures can be added as appropriate and needed.

Throw Bag Drill (Figure 7..20) – In general, the throw bag drill is more applicable in an instructional setting than on a commercial trip. From an instructional perspective, the throw bag drill provides several benefits. It allows students the opportunity to practice defensive and active swimming in swiftwater. Students gain experience in throwing throw bags. In terms of the discussion of being comfortable in moving water, it provides the instructor with an opportunity to evaluate student comfort in swiftwater. Instructors and guides need to evaluate their students and passengers on a continuous basis.

Conducting the throw bag drill is described in more detail in the Swiftwater Rescue Manual (Kauffman, 2017). The manual describes the role of the instructor and specific details regarding swimming, throwing the throw bag and setting up safety. Also, it discusses how to conduct the activity safely. There has been at least one lawsuit associated with throw bag drill (Dzialo, 1998, and Kauffman and Gullian, 2006). In terms of this section, this discussion is equally applicable to the previous discussion on the jump-off rock activity. The instructor needs to consider site selection for the activity, general and specific supervision, rules, and rescue in case of mishap.

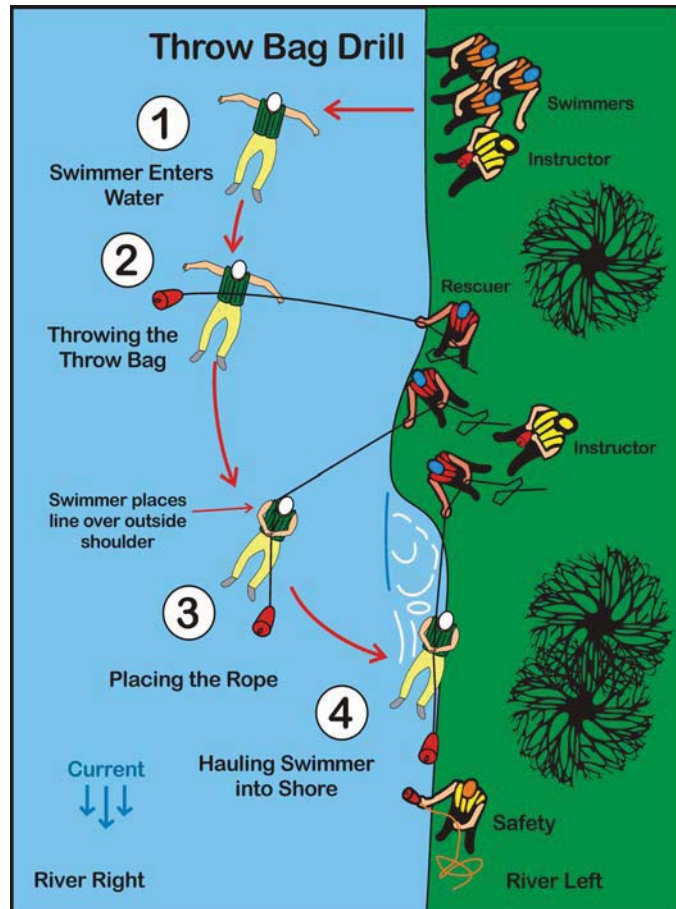


Figure 7..20: Throw Bag Drill – The throw bag drill is a two activities in one. It is both a defensive swimming and throw bag throwing exercise. Source: author – [file:\BAG-ThrowRopeDrill.cdr]

Landing the Raft

As with the put-in, practices will vary greatly from take-out to take-out. Generally, prior to arriving, announce to the crew that the raft is approaching the take-out. Indicate the protocols for taking out at the take-out. Topics may include remaining in the raft until the guide or captain indicates it is okay to step out of the raft. Additional instructions many include what to do with equipment, carrying rafts, and deflating them. Again, instructions will vary with whether a commercial of private group and whether vehicles and trailers are allowed at the take-out.

Negligence

The following is a primer on negligence. For a more in depth discussion, see Kauffman and Moiseichik (2013). It is provided because litigation seems to be a common topic in the outdoor industry and rafting. In terms of this chapter this section complements the other sections including the experience provided passengers, river running approaches and group management. Also, know the common practices for the activity you are performing and practice them. This is the standard of care to which you will be held. If all other groups on the river wear helmets, then wearing helmets is considered a common practice. If there is an accident with a head injury on your trip and the passenger is not wearing a helmet, the guide in question may not have followed the common practices of his industry and may be considered negligent.

Four Components

– For negligence to occur, four elements must be present. First, there must be a *duty* (i.e. contractual obligation) between the raft company and participant. A raft guide has a duty to provide a “safe environment”, but there is no guarantee that it will provide safety. Second, there must be a *breach of duty*. Either, the guide didn’t do what they were supposed to do (i.e. omission), or what the guide did was incorrect (i.e. commission). Not warning passengers of a hazard would constitute an omission, and not taking the standard route through the rapids might be considered an act of commission. Third, there must be *proximate cause* or some relationship between the breach of duty and the injury, damage, or loss. If a passenger drowns, it needs to be shown that it was due to the passenger swimming into a hazard without being warned, or because the guide took the wrong route. Fourth, there is *injury, damage or loss*. In the previous example, drowning is an example of an injury, damage or loss.

All four elements must be present for negligence to occur. If one of them isn’t present, there is no negligence. A possible breach of duty, the guide doesn’t warn passengers of an undercut rock. A passenger falls out of the raft, successfully swims past the undercut rock, and is pulled back into the raft by the guide without any injury. Although not warning the passenger potentially constitutes a breach of duty, there is no negligence because there is no injury, damage or loss.

Common Practices

– Regarding the duty owed to the passenger, a raft guide is required to provide a standard of care that represents the *common practices* or *industry standards* for the activity they are conducting. This is a higher standard than what a reasonable and prudent person would be expected to do. It is what other raft guides and companies would do. It is a higher standard. It is the standard of a professional, not an unknowledgeable person.

In terms of risk management strategies, there are several defenses available to guides and companies. Overall, there are two strategies: risk reduction (e.g. risk reduction and avoidance) and transfer the costs (e.g. waivers, insurance and subcontracting).

Risk Reduction

– If you are in the business, you are into *risk reduction* as a risk management strategy. It is really this simple. Essentially, this means that the guide and company seek to reduce risks (e.g. roller coaster experience). This doesn’t mean all risks can be eliminated, they can’t. However, decreasing actual risks and increasing perceived risks are always a good strategy. Avoidance or not performing the activity is a viable alternative also. If the river is at flood and above the cutoff level on the gauge, taking passengers down the river may be terminated.

Waivers

– A word on waivers. They are an important tool. They do not reduce or eliminate an accident from happening. Waivers attempt to transfer the cost of injury back to the participant, even when the guide or company are essentially in the wrong (i.e. breach of duty). The value of waivers is strictly a state by state basis and they can vary from being worthless to being upheld in most cases. In one case, the

lawyers argued whether the body was on the Georgia or South Carolina side. In South Carolina, waivers have no value. In Georgia, they have a higher standard and the plaintiff needs to show gross negligence.

Know what the common practices are and follow them. “*The bottom line is that a recreation professional will be held to the standard of care that represents the common practices or industry standards for the activity he is conducting.*” (Kauffman and Moiseichik, 2013, p.17). Conceptually, the roller coaster is a good model to follow. Reduce actual risks and increase perceived risks to enhance the experience of your passengers. It is a good formula for reducing accidents.

Summary

This chapter focuses on the trip leader and guides leadership responsibilities. It starts by discussing the flow experience. One take-away for a successful trip leader or guide is to create an optimum experience for passengers by matching the challenges present with the skills and expectations of the participants. The roller coaster provides a good model where the trip leader or guide minimizes actual risks while maximizing perceived risk. This is true even on rivers with challenges. Next, the chapter discusses and provides suggestions for the pre-trip talk. Third, river running is discussed in term of the principle of supervision. Strategies are suggested and the Cheryl Taylor incident underlines the importance of spacing and proper supervision. Fourth, the chapter discusses the importance of assessing people’s comfort in the water. This section has an emphasis on instructional programs. Next, seating arrangements are discussed in terms of providing proper trim and motive power. Last, there is a primer on negligence. It brings full-circle the discussion regarding minimizing actual risks and maximizing perceived risks to achieve the optimum experience for passengers.

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