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The Journey That Leads
To The Destination

Life is a current that carries you through the twists and turns, darkness and daylight of the river. Crystal waters, murky depths, and the rushings of a cascade are yet to be embraced at one point. Like a young salmon choosing the waters one wishes to venture in, those moments in life become a diary of memories. And in the stories of both the salmon and mine, we share one belief: the journey matters more than the destination.

My mom has always been the anchor that keeps the ship at bay... the protection from capricious wind currents, gusting against the open sails. Her assertions and guidance have led to my own aspirations and victories.

However, last summer, I discovered a belief that shaped my previous philosophies, and changed the way I regarded my mom's assertions. But despite all this, my mom just happens to be the beginning of every story in my life, and the source of my journeys. She is also the one who opened the door to the story that I am about to tell.

Ever since I was very young, my mom had high expectations and wished me to endeavor countless accomplishments. I was raised, hanging on the edges of my mom's words, "You will never fail, if you believe that motivation and determination will never fail you." I recall her taking me to Princeton University every month, for we lived close nearby. As a result, I found the shadows of Princeton looming in my dreams. My whole life afterward had been to seek out the route that led to that destination, set up for me, ever since I set my own heart towards a dream, which I hope may someday become reality. But hoping wasn't enough. I came to believe

there was no limit for how high I was able to jump. It was my own fault if I didn't jump high enough in the end.

My mom continued to strive to see me reflect achievements in education, and activities crucial to building a successful future. Last summer, she had pushed me to embark on a journey in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Improving my writing and public speaking skills, were among the many goals that still laid in store. As a result, I had anticipated a private school at the top of a hill where we would obligate educators to help us study the written language in a straightforward, technical manner. However, I was quite taken back when I first arrived.

Pleased, I was, remembering my dormitory peered out to a beautiful view of the slopes, the woods, and nature's own gardens. I soon found myself in a welcoming environment, with amiable acquaintances, and engaging teachers. The teachers and students thought deeply, examining pieces of writing that exhibited eloquence, good perspective, and strong support. Later, discussing the topic of the idea and the way the author approached the topic, had helped me gather the knowledge and ideas I needed to write one of my own. We even had some classes outside in the fresh atmosphere, where it was so easy to feel enlightened, and connected with the surroundings. In public speaking classes, we spread outside to practice declamation, following guidelines to use our voice in order to make writing come alive. Our words echoed across the hills, while the aroma of forest pine and summer's wild flowers embraced my senses. The serene environment was enough to show me just how much I admired and valued wisdom, understanding, and determination. These, I found, were reflected in education and in my mom's memorable words. To top everything, I was even luckier to have such a best friend, Sophia, to spend my whole summer with.

Early in the mornings, Sophia and I, accompanied by some of the other girls, played volleyball out on the stretching slopes. The sun's signature greeting shall be etched in my mind forever. The warmth of golden light presented a painting of

watercolors in the open sky. These were the moments that remained undisturbed, other than occasional laughter. Chirps of finches rippling the crisp morning air were equally inviting.

Almost everyday, we visited worthwhile places in New Hampshire. Franconia, Swift River, The Lost River, and Flume Gorge were among the nature sites that the camp arranged in the schedule. I think it was here, at each of these places, where I shared a common feeling with Thoreau, Robert Frost, and many other great writers. The cascading sleets of pristine water, and the pattern of scattered stars on the stone floor, created from shadows of the tree leaves, all held significant meaning. I found inspiration in these small details. Calmness was discovered in the serene environment. Each breathtaking and indescribable moment spent truly blew me away.

It was those few weeks, sleeping on the brink of nature, that I now come to realize something as I reflect on my own experiences. The journey of the past summer is worth more than the gossamer of my destination. Of course, I will still work as hard as ever, and remember my mom's words. I will continue to believe in my values, and dream of graduating from Princeton. However, I now recognize that living the journey, is even more satisfying than living the dream. A profound question when I was little, surfaces in my mind... what is more inviting than the future? If there is one thing I'm certain about, I'd say this...the present.