

An Analogy of Depression.

You're in a small boat on the ocean. As you travel today, the ocean is flat and calm. Something happens, though, and the weather changes within minutes. A rogue wave appears off the starboard side; you pull the throttle into neutral, and the wave smacks the boat so hard that you are knocked overboard. As you hit the water, the cold steals your breath away. Your eyes remain open, and you watch as you sink deeper. The air trapped in your clothes escapes as hundreds of bubbles that then rise in the opposite direction you're sinking. The life jacket you donned earlier opened as it was designed to do, and your descent stopped. A pause occurs, and you aren't descending or ascending, but then you begin rising towards the surface. As your head pops out of the water and into the air, you instinctively take a deep breath.

It's hard to swim because you're wearing winter clothes, shoes, and a heavy jacket, now all acting like heavy weights from the water they've absorbed, but you manage to dog paddle to the boat. You're winded from the exertion it took to swim wearing the water-logged clothing, and your breathing is deep and labored. Somehow, you get the now sodden jacket that feels like it weighs one hundred pounds unzipped and off. You try to throw it into the boat, but it's too heavy, and as you push it up and over the side and into the boat, your head is forced underwater again. Now, you dog paddle to the stern. You pull yourself up and into the boat using the outboard engine as a ladder. The effort to get yourself and waterlogged clothes back into the boat leaves you exhausted. Reaching into your pocket, you pull your phone out and see it's still working. You place it on a ledge in the morning sun. As your butt lands on a seat, you hear the squelch as water is forced from your clothes.

It's time to head back in and then home, and it's time to calm things down, too. You put the throttle into Forward and steer the boat towards its dock.

Giving yourself credit for surviving so easily never occurs to you. You take it in stride like you have done many times before. Experience has taught you many things, and adding the life jacket was important. You got the best type, the one with CO2 cartridges that self-inflate when they come in contact with water. It was something you hoped you'd never need, but you got it and wore it just in case.

As you near home, you smile for the first time today. You know that what just happened is already in the past, and being in the present is now what's important. Rogue waves occur, and your experience reminded you to put the throttle into neutral so the boat wouldn't travel away, leaving you stranded. Experience also reminded you to wear the life jacket you purchased when you are in the boat.

As you pull into your driveway, you wonder if you should ask a more experienced person for help. But what are they going to help you with? Rogue waves happen on the ocean, and you managed it well. You didn't drown, and the boat didn't drive away without you onboard.

You remind yourself to buy new CO2 cartridges and install them in your life jacket before your next boat trip.

Written by Peter Skeels © 9-25-2024