

Are You Going to Jump, Jimmy Parker?

By
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It was the hottest day in July. Jimmy Parker stood on the edge of a cliff, looking down at the cool blue water of the Mokelumne River below. Richie Jones was there, too. Richie Jones was a big kid, and all the other kids looked up to him.

“Are you going to jump, Jimmy Parker?” Richie asked. Jimmy looked down at the river. It was a long way down. From deep inside of him, a big feeling began bubbling up. That feeling was FEAR!

“Don’t jump, Jimmy Parker!” the fear screamed. “You could break a leg! It might not be deep enough! You could hit your head on a rock and DIE!”

He could see it in his mind – Jimmy Parker sprawled out on a rock with a broken head. He would never be the same.

Then, another feeling swelled up. And this feeling was: BRAVERY!

“You can do it, Jimmy Parker,” the brave feeling said. You’re tough! It will be fun and daring! Everyone will think you’re brave! Live a little!”

He could see it in his mind – Jimmy Parker, strong, confident, climbing up out of the river after a fearless jump.

Jimmy looked at Richie Jones. Richie nodded and smiled.

“Jump!” said the brave feeling.

“Don’t!” said the fear.

Jimmy Parker stood frozen between his two feelings.

Then, in his mind, Jimmy saw the face of his coach, Mr. Lewis. “To be brave, you have to be smart,” he heard him say.

He looked at Richie Jones and climbed down off the ledge.

“I guess you’re not going to jump, Jimmy Parker,” he said with a wide grin. Jimmy looked at him and smiled back. He climbed down to the river and jumped into the water from below. The water was very deep. He looked up at the cliff above. The rock wall was smooth and straight and there were no jagged rocks jutting out.

There were two teenage boys sitting beside the river. “Have you ever jumped from the cliff up there?” Jimmy asked them, pointing to the high place where Richie Jones was now standing.

“I’ve done it many times,” one of the boys said.

“Yeah, it’s great,” said the other boy. “But you want to jump to the left. The water’s deepest on that side, and it’s easier to get out of the river by climbing up on that rock.” He pointed to a big flat rock on the other side.

“Thanks!” Jimmy said as he turned to go.

Jimmy Parker felt smart. And brave. He climbed up the hill. He looked at Richie Jones and smiled.

Then he jumped off the cliff and into the cool blue water below.