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Stillness surrounds me, interrupted by only the sound of the rushing river. A faint breeze stirs. I turn my eyes toward the blue ribbon of water, carving through both the canyon and my inner reflections. The story of the river unfolds long before it flows past my wandering gaze. It originates in a faraway place, in an event so seemingly insignificant and yet astronomical in potential. Who would venture to guess, seeing one small drop of water born from an expanse of melting snow, that it would eventually alter the powerful oceans? This drop must travel far to find its course. It holds power to carve mountains as it forges a path toward the ocean. The path varies - at times it meanders through green fields, at times it roars with effort in evading boulders and trees. At times the small drop is swept by the force of a thousand others; -and together they fight as one; at times it forges its path alone, struggling for relief. And then it finally reaches its goal - it pours into the ocean and becomes a part of something powerful, something that both gives and takes life. Some would argue that the oceans are indifferent, that the vastness of the seas coldly encompass the small drop. Yet if each individual drop vanished, the ocean could not be.

This inspiring journey of the American river connects my existence to the composition of the river. Like that single drop of water, I too have begun my journey. I have traveled on my path of life, making choices that lead me through ridges and valleys. Each decision that I have made has shaped my course through the terrain of life, a course that in turn shapes me. Challenges I face are paralleled with the drop of water pushing against cold stone; moments of fulfillment are the cascading of a beautiful waterfall. This connection that I feel to the great American river cannot be mine alone. Every member of the human race has their own set of adventures that anchors them to the journey of the river. The movement of the American river transcends our differences and unites us under a commonality found simply in existence and experience. As such, all visitors must be enabled to feel this connection to the river. Through raising awareness in the surrounding community, people will see the river - not as a simple obstacle that they routinely drive by and ignore, but as a place where they can reflect and become self aware. In educating members of the community to the existence of the river and canyons, they will come to more fully appreciate the landscape once taken for granted. The creation of a better experience starts in simply encouraging the first experience. And when the experience begins, the connection can be felt and deepened; the one drop can become thousands of drops; the roar of the river can intensify as together we strive toward our goal of reaching ocean and changing the world.