

**Raccoon and Beaver**  
(Being versus Doing)

**An Traditional**  
**Cherokee**  
**Story**

**Raccoon and Beaver  
(Gvli ale Doyi)**

**Instructions**

American Indians often used stories to teach the lessons of life and to help bring abstract ideas into the concrete world. Quite frequently they used what was happening around them as the basis for the stories. American Indians did not believe that the animals and plants and the rest of the inhabitants of Mother Earth (Elohino) were put here for the use of the two-legged (humans), but that the two-legged were put here to watch over and care for everything on Mother Earth (Elohino). They also believed that at one time the two-legged could easily talk with the other animals, and many of the stories they told for learning were about animals.

The following is such a story. It is a Traditional Cherokee (Tsalagi) story. As with most stories, there are many lessons contained within it. It depends upon which part of the circle one stands and their point of view of the story as to what lessons someone will gain from it.

Feel free to print this story and use it as you wish; in school, training, counseling, or other places where someone needs to examine their life. We ask that all pages are printed with our contact information and that the story is kept intact. If someone else would like a copy of the file, we ask that you have them come visit our web site to get it, instead of you giving them the file directly.

Remember, there is no right or wrong interpretations of lessons for any story. What ever anyone sees in it is true for them.

Best wishes to all,

Gary Lear  
President & CEO  
Resource Development Systems, LLC

## **Raccoon and Beaver (Being versus Doing)**

Raccoon is a jolly fellow as he wanders along the woods, checking everything out. He moves from the flowers, to the brambles, to the rocks, and to the streams, sniffing and marveling at the wonders of Mother Earth. As he comes across a berry he pops it into his mouth, giving thanks, and then takes a second one and slips it into his pouch that he has around his neck. For you see, you will never know when you might want a snack or find a friend to share with. And as he wanders along he sings his little song: “To-da-la-do, to-da-la-de, the hardest job is just to Be.”

And so Raccoon ambles along, sniffing and probing into everything, with no place safe from his inquisitive nose. Chasing butterflies, and romping in meadows, Raccoon finally finds himself along side the stream. As he plays among the rocks he slips and falls into the rushing water.

“Help, Help!” he cries. “I can’t swim! Someone save me! Help! Help!” Raccoon continues to holler as he rides the water down the stream towards Beaver’s dam. Beaver, working very hard on his dam ignores Raccoon, as he knows perfectly well that raccoons can swim. “Help me Brother Beaver,” Raccoon hollers. “Save me from the water!”

“Roll over and stand up,” said Beaver gruffly. “The water is not that deep and you know full well that you can swim.” Raccoon rolled over and climbed up on a rock with a grin on his face as he shook all over, throwing water all around and into Beaver’s face. Beaver shook his own face to get the water out of his eyes and continued “you are lazy, Raccoon, and always distracting others from their work. Winter is coming and you will have no place to live. Now go away and stop bothering me, because I will have a place to live this winter.”

Raccoon replied, “But Mother Earth always provides for me. I have no worries about a place to live, as She will provide one. Besides, I know of a tree that has a bee hive in it that is dripping with honey. Even Bear doesn’t know of this tree. The Bees have more than enough to share and they won’t mind if we take some. All you need to do is chew down the tree and we can share the honey and then go off and dance the Friendship Dance. Come on Beaver, let’s go get some honey!”

Beaver replied again even more gruffly, “I said NO! I have things to do, so go away and leave me alone!” And with that Beaver swam off to go get more sticks to put in his dam.

Raccoon began to wander off and called over his shoulder, still a grin on his face, “Ok, Beaver. But if you change your mind just holler for me. I’ll be in the woods and will surely hear you.” And with that, Raccoon went bounding and crashing off into the woods, still playing and frolicking.

Beaver continued to pull sticks from the banks of the stream and over to his dam, the whole time muttering angrily to himself about Raccoon. “How dare he! How dare he distract me from my work with useless play! Can’t he see that I have so much to do! I must get this dam finished or I’ll have no home for this winter!” And with each branch that Beaver brought to the dam, the angrier that he got over the incident with Raccoon.

In fact, he was so angry that he stopped paying attention to things around him, including the rain that had begun. While the rain had started lightly at first, it was now coming down quite heavily. But Beaver paid no attention to it. He was so totally focused on working on and completing his dam, and so thoroughly mad at Raccoon for trying to distract him from his task, that he never noticed the rain or the raising water in the stream. Then all of a sudden, as Beaver was standing in the middle of his dam, there was a great rumble and a flash of lightening. Beaver stopped and looked around and realized that it was pouring down rain.

He again heard another rumble, but this time there was no lightening that preceded it. It was a different sound. Lower and continuous, getting louder and louder, the rumble continued. Then from around the bend in the stream a wall of water came rushing towards Beaver and his dam. Frozen in place, Beaver watched as the wall of water came closer and closer until it hit him and the dam with fantastic force that it shook the dam and washed over it and Beaver. The sticks of the dam shifted and some were washed away, and in all of the movement Beaver found his foot wedged down in between the sticks of his dam just where it had washed away.

While the wall of water had swept on and Beaver's head was above water now, he was still stuck and unable to get his foot free. Now the water in the stream was rising up higher and higher, already up to his neck. Beaver began to holler for help, hoping that anyone would hear him and come to his rescue before the stream rose to totally engulf him.

In the woods, Raccoon was still frolicking along, slipping from under this bush to the next to keep as dry as possible in the rain. All of a sudden he heard cries for help. He paused and listened. "That sounds like my friend, Beaver. He's in trouble!" And with that he went bounding through the woods to the stream. Arriving at the edge of the stream Raccoon saw Beaver out in the middle, out just beyond where his dam disappeared into the ever rising and fast rushing stream, his head just barely above the water.

With out a second's thought, Raccoon went bounding out along the top of the dam that was still there until he reached Beaver. Taking a deep breath he dove under the water to pull and yank on the sticks that trapped Beaver's foot. All of a sudden, just as the water was about to rise over Beaver's head, Raccoon freed Beaver's foot and they both found themselves scampering along the dam as it began to be washed away by the rushing water.

Finally reaching the bank of the stream, both shook furiously to rid their fur of the water that drenched their hides. Then they both lay down and catching their breath, Beaver managed to gasp out, "Raccoon, you have saved my life!" Raccoon just grinned and opened his pouch and pulled out a couple of plump blackberries and handed one to Beaver. Both enjoyed the afternoon snack as the rain stopped and Grandfather Sun began to shine again from behind the clouds. They lay in the sunlight and dried off, enjoying the warmth of Grandfather Sun.

Later they went off to frolic in the woods, and eventually they did find that honey tree and shared the sweet nectar and danced the Friendship Dance. To this day, Raccoon and Beaver are fast friends, and call each other "Brother." And if you are careful and quiet, you can slip off into the woods in the autumn and listen; you will hear Raccoon and Beaver dancing the Friendship Dance and singing Beaver's song.

The hardest job is just to Be!