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# First You Have to Row a Little Boat: Reflections on Life & Living

By Richard Bode



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Now with a brand new foreword from *New York Times* bestselling author Jeffrey Zaslow.

**FIRST YOU HAVE TO ROW A LITTLE BOAT** first hit shelves in the mid 1990s and has been inspiring readers ever since. Written by a grown man looking back on his childhood, it reflects on what learning to sail taught him about life: making choices, adapting to change, and becoming his own person. The book is filled with the spiritual wisdom and thought-provoking discoveries that marked such books as *Walden*, *The Prophet*, and *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. For nearly twenty years, it has enchanted and endeared sailors and non-sailors alike, but foremost, anyone who seeks large truths in small things. This refurbished edition will find a place in the hearts of a whole new generation of readers.



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## **First You Have to Row a Little Boat: Reflections on Life & Living** By Richard Bode Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Bode ( *Blue Sloop at Dawn* ) uses his great love of sailing as a metaphor for the tides of life. Describing his own introduction to sailing at age 12, he stresses the importance of mastering the simple, small things before attempting more complicated actions. Later the author purchases a blue sloop, matures and, as a grown man with children, decides to sell the sloop and sail into new, uncharted waters, assuming he will never forget the many important lessons the boat taught him. Other themes include complacency ("Going with the Wind"), confusion ("Fogbound"), forgiveness ("A Forgiving Boat"), and violence ("A Lazy Sailor at Heart").

Determinedly inspirational, this book will appeal to admirers of Robert Fulghum et al.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Good-natured parables in which the lessons learned from sailing are translated into lessons about living. Bode (*Blue Sloop at Dawn*, 1979) looks back across a half century to his boyhood years on Long Island Sound, where he fell in love with boats and learned to sail. In the title piece, the author, as a 12-year-old eager to sail, is first made to row a small boat, and from the experience comes to understand the importance of mastery not over the boat or the elements but over himself. Sailing with a favorable wind teaches him the dangers of complacency and, from a frightening collision, he learns to handle his fears about the unpredictable. Even sailors' knots become metaphors as Bode likens a sturdy square knot to a good marriage and an improperly tied granny knot to a mismatched couple who "scrape and chafe against each other." Getting lost in fog teaches him not to thrash about wildly in confusion but to wait calmly for "the one constant in the swirling mist that would set me on my rightful course"--a lesson that serves him well in midlife when his private life collapses and he's lost in a different kind of fog. Sailing also teaches him to attend to details, for, as he puts it, "everything significant is small and slow." A frequent contributor to *Reader's Digest*, Bode is adept at pulling messages out of ordinary experiences. The images he creates are simple and clear, and so are the lessons he derives from them. A warm, fuzzy read for those who like to curl up with cozy philosophizing. -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"Bode uses his great love of sailing as a metaphor for the tides of life... Determinedly inspirational, this book will appeal to admirers of Robert Fulghum." --*Publisher's Weekly* (starred review)

"Bode is adept at pulling messages out of ordinary experiences. The images he creates are simple and clear, and so are the lessons he derives from them." --*Kirkus Reviews*

"If you feel lost on this great sea of life, this book is a compass. Its powerful words will carry you like a gentle breeze toward companionship, toward love, toward the deepest self you are called to be. It will ultimately lead you home." --Regina Brett, author of *God Never Blinks: 50 Lessons for Life's Little Detours*

"This is a wonderful book, warm and thoughtful and beautifully written. It has a great deal of practical wisdom to offer us all in our complicated lives, but beyond that it is a work of sheer grace. No one who reads it will ever forget it." --Reeve Lindbergh, author of *Forward from Here*

"What a wonderful book it is! Pure Joy." --Walter Cronkite

"Even without knowing a lot about sailing, I was charming by its wisdom and passion." --Harold S. Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

"Such an imaginative way to compare our sport of sailing to life. I really enjoyed how Richard shares his experience of sailing and how subconsciously it was preparing him for growth. Keeping life simple and appreciating the little things rather than getting caught up in the race or the idea of the adventure is an aspect of life that is easily forgotten these days." --Anna Tunnicliffe, 2008 Olympic Gold Medalist in sailing

"Richard Bode's writing is effortlessly sublime, like ghosting along on a smooth sea on a sunny day towards a destination even more rewarding than one had imagined. *First You Have to Row a Little Boat* reveals the most powerful but rarely discussed lures of messing about in boats. In Bode's fine memoir, sailors and landlubbers alike discover how sailing can transcend sport to shape our lifestyles and philosophies, and how the exploratory machines people use to venture upon the sea are not just playthings but powerful tools with which we plumb the depths of ourselves." --Steven Callahan, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Adrift: 76 Days Lost at Sea*

"Richard Bode uses his lifetime knowledge of sailing to steer his personal ship to a new port through a stormy time of life. Literally a voyage of discovery, he takes his silent desperation to the sea for solace. A must read for men stalled in "irons" and for the women who love them." --Joan Anderson, author of *A Year by the Sea*

"A simple title leads to an inspirational story. All of us can live better lives thanks to Rick Bode's narrative." --Gary Jobson, America's Cup winner and ESPN sailing commentator

"Leaving you inspired to follow a path of which you decide to take in life. Rick Bode allows the reader to ponder with his view, 'So the only matter of consequence before me is what I will do with my allotted time.' The question for the reader then becomes do I stay onshore or embark on a journey into the unknown sea of life?" --Zach Railey, 2008 Olympic Silver Medalist in sailing

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Sally Oneal:**

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in each and every way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these people survives, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a book your ability to survive increase then having chance to remain than other is high. In your case who want to start reading a book, we give you that *First You Have to Row a Little Boat: Reflections on Life & Living* book as basic and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

#### **Kimberly Williams:**

The publication with title *First You Have to Row a Little Boat: Reflections on Life & Living* includes a lot of information that you can understand it. You can get a lot of gain after read this book. That book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this publication represented the condition of the world today. That is

important to you to find out how the improvement of the world. This book will bring you inside new era of the global growth. You can read the e-book on your own smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

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