

"Don't follow where the path may lead... Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."  
-Robert Frost

Everyone is a traveler, choosing the roads to follow on the map of their continuous journey, life. There is never a straight path that leaves one with but a sole direction in which to head. Regardless of the original message that Robert Frost had intended to convey, his poem, "The Road Not Taken", has left its readers with many different interpretations. It is one's past, present and the attitude with which he looks upon his future that determines the shade of the light that he will see the poem in. In any case however, this poem clearly demonstrates Frost's belief that it is the road that one chooses that makes him the man who he is. "And sorry I could not travel both..." It is always difficult to make a decision because it is impossible not to wonder about the opportunity cost, what will be missed out on. There is a strong sense of regret before the choice is even made and it lies in the knowledge that in one lifetime, it is impossible to travel down every path. In an attempt to make a decision, the traveler "looks down one as far as I could". The road that will be chosen leads to the unknown, as does any choice in life. As much he may strain his eyes to see as far the road stretches, eventually it surpasses his vision and he can never see where it is going to lead. It is the way that he chooses here that sets him off on his journey and decides where he is going. "Then took the other, just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim." What made it have the better claim is that "it was grassy and wanted wear." It was something that was obviously not for everyone because it seemed that the majority of people took the other path therefore he calls it "the road less travelled by". The fact that the traveler took this path over the more popular, secure one indicates the type of personality he has, one that does not want to necessarily follow the crowd but do more of what has never been done, what is new and different. "And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black." The leaves had covered the ground and since the time they had fallen no one had yet to pass by on this road. Perhaps Frost does this because each time a person comes to the point where they have to make a choice, it is new to them, somewhere they have never been and they tend to feel as though no one else had ever been there either. "I kept the first for another day!" The desire to travel down both paths is expressed and is not unusual, but "knowing how way leads on to way", the speaker of this poem realizes that the decision is not just a temporary one and he "doubted if I should ever come back." This is his common sense speaking and acknowledging that what he chooses now will affect every other choice he makes afterward. Once you have performed an act or spoken a word that crystalizes who you are, there is no turning back, it cannot be undone. Once again at the end of the poem the regret hangs over the traveler like a heavy cloud about to burst. He realizes that at the end of his life, "somewhere ages and ages hence", he will have regrets about having never gone back and traveling down the roads he did not take. Yet he remains proud of his decision and he recognizes that it was this path that he chose that made him turn out the way and he did and live his life the way in which he lived. "I took the road less traveled by and that had made all the difference." To this man, what was most important, what really made the difference, is that he did what he wanted, even if it meant taking the road less traveled. If he hadn't, he wouldn't be the same man he is now. There are many equally valid meanings to this poem and Robert Frost may have intended this. He may have been trying to achieve a universal understanding. In other words, there is no judgement, no specificity, no moral. There is simply a narrator who makes a decision in his life that had changed the direction of his life from what it may have otherwise been. It allows all readers from all different

experiences to relate to the poem.