

Discovering Yourself

Motorcycling won't change who you are, but it might well bring out the best in you.

> By **Alisa Clickenger**

Psychologist Paul Piff asked, “does money make you mean?” in his TED Talk about how wealth changes people, often not for the better. As a society, we may embrace the notion that wealthy people are greedier and more self-centered and out of touch than their poorer peers. Does this also apply to motorcycling?

Numerous studies have shown that as personal wealth increases, some may indeed begin to lack compassion and empathy. Wealthy people, especially women, are often seen or portrayed as capricious, vain, narcissistic and self-absorbed.

But myth and reality do not always align. Plenty of rich people donate to charities, buy large chunks of endangered land to preserve it, and create foundations meant to empower communities in the impoverished regions of the world. Wealth alone does not magically transform people into either greedy egomaniacs or altruistic do-gooders. Rather, it enhances who people already are.

Motorcycling is often viewed as something dangerous and hardcore, even bordering on extreme. People often associate the sport with popular images of badassery. To be a motorcyclist is to love leather, loud pipes and tattoos. Or perhaps being a motorcyclist is about wearing leather onesies and racing a track at death-defying speeds. At the very least, people often assume that motorcycling requires extraordinary skill, courage and considerable resources.

But as wealth alone cannot change who you truly are, so motorcycling will not transform you into someone else. Motorcycling only enhances who you already are. Motorcycling, in all its

Connecting with others who enjoy riding is just one of many ways riding a motorcycle can help you discover yourself.



different shapes, schools and purposes, is a great tool of self-discovery.

BEING IN THE MOMENT

Riding a motorcycle requires you to be fully in the present. It's just you, the two wheels, and the road or trail below. There is no room for doubt or distraction. Your senses are sharpened as you feel the wind rush past your helmet and lean into a corner, scanning the curve ahead. Therefore, riders often describe motorcycling as meditation or therapy.

Being in the moment fully and uncompromisingly realigns your focus and bares your inner fears, desires and hopes. This resulting honesty with yourself can be a great tool in

rediscovering who you are and where are you going, both outwardly and internally.

FACING YOUR FEARS

Learning to ride a motorcycle is not a complicated process, but it does require a little determination and grit. Swinging your leg over that saddle for the first time, taking off, learning the operation of the clutch and the brakes, taking the test to get your endorsement, and then braving your first solo ride will require you to face your fears.

Whether that fear is balancing on two wheels, dealing with the bike's weight, being afraid of traffic, or questioning your navigational skills, mo-

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motorcycling will force you to overcome these doubts. And in turn, facing your fears and doing it anyway will boost your confidence like nothing else.

REVEALING YOUR PASSION

Motorcycling does not have to be about bike clubs, vintage elegance, track racing chic or dirt biking endurance. As a rider, you do not have to adhere to any group, style or school. Motorcycling can be whatever you want it to be.

It is a fantastic way to travel and explore the world. It can become a sport. It can be family fun, a creative way to beat the morning commute, an artistic expression, or a path to a new career. Motorcycling can be enjoyed in so many ways and from many different angles. It's up to you to discover who you are on two wheels.

CONNECTING

When you become a motorcyclist, you find yourself in a wonderful and incredibly supportive community. It doesn't matter whether you're a new rider or a veteran, it doesn't matter what you ride, or how you ride.

What matters is that you show up on a bike. The motorcycling community is one of the most welcoming, inclusive and friendly out there. You can always count on other riders to help you out, guide you and cheer you on.

REKINDLING THE ADVENTURE

Feeling curious about the world and wanting to explore something new is a very precious state of being. We often lose it along the way, because life happens. We

Riding might inspire a sense of adventure, taking you to remote places where there's no one to depend on but yourself. It can also open doors to more quality time with loved ones.



need to take care of bills, children, health, aging parents and mortgages.

Motorcycling can rekindle that spirit of adventure and make you remember what it was like to look at the world with wonder. Even out for a day's ride along your favorite local roads, or setting out on a weekend trip, an adventure awaits, and your heart skips a beat.

GETTING PHYSICAL

Motorcycling is a raw, physical experience; there are no doors and windows to hide behind. Even if you aren't tackling technical trails or racing along

on a track, motorcycling is a hands-on experience that requires exposure to the elements.

Many people live sedentary lives. Motorcycling can help us get out of the office chair and into the sun. Being in touch with your body through motorcycling is a wonderful experience that might just remind you what you are truly capable of. For myself, it's helped immensely with physical coordination.

LEARNING

Regardless of how long you have been riding, you are in a constant state of learning. After those first short rides comes a longer journey. Learning new riding skills and techniques, testing different bikes, studying mechanics, going on motorcycle tours and attending events or rallies all add to new, different experiences.

When you are constantly learning, you are constantly growing, and that is an empowering way to live. Although a lot of riders are born into motorcycling families and learn to ride at a very young age, more and more adults are taking up motorcycling later in life, often as a bucket list item.

As the motorcycle culture changes and evolves, new people are always discovering the value, the freedom and the fun in motorcycling. Somewhere along the way, they might discover themselves. Why not encourage them and help them along? **MCN**