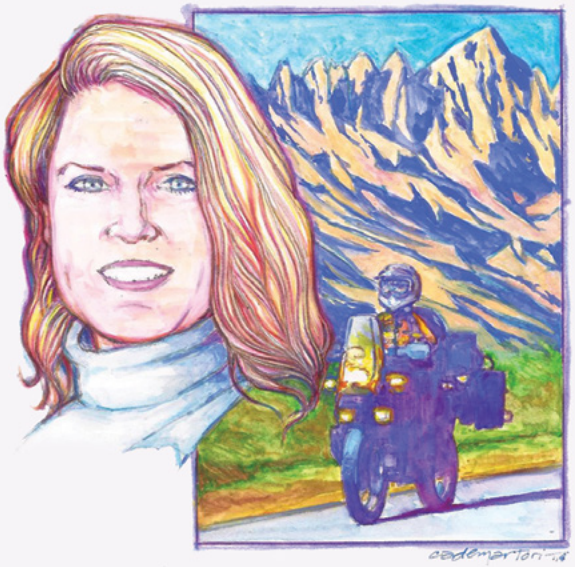
DIVERSITY+



By Alisa Clickenger

WHAT SUCCESS MEANS TO ME...

An Opportunity To Redefine Ourselves

This month I am knee-deep in planning for a women's motorcycling event I am putting together in 2020. I have been working on organizing the event for more than a year now, and one of the things I find most challenging, and frankly most exciting, is the necessity for me to hold a big and bright future vision. I have to hold onto this vision even when things aren't going well in my business, even when I have difficulty getting the ideas in my head organized for potential stakeholders, and even though there are naysayers. I see my event as a microcosm of the motorcycle industry at large.

For nearly a decade now we, as an industry, have consistently repeated the refrain about new unit sales numbers being down, riders aging out of the sport, Millennials not spending money on bikes, etc. This is all valuable information in the equation, but I think of these 'facts' as a distraction... and quite frankly, a cop out. By blaming the economy, lack of riders and Millennials, we are not empowering ourselves to effect the very change that we wish to see in the industry.

By continuing to repeat this refrain we are actually giving away our power to make change and wasting precious energy on what ***is***, rather than focusing on what ***could be***. Let us, for a moment, imagine what would happen if we all implement the refrain of 'What if'? What if we are simply perpetuating an illusion that becomes reality through the power of our very own words? What if we actually aren't in a slump at all, but this was the New Normal?

What if we gave a new definition to success?

What if we all, as an industry, started working together rather than solely working within our silos of power? What if we all started cooperating to bring new riders into the sport? What if we redefined success as it pertains to current market conditions... and stopped dreaming of the past? What would that look like?

Who would we be — who could we be — as an industry if we let go of that gloried go-go past and instead spent that energy focusing on solutions for the new norm? What if we all start stepping outside of our habits and create something brand new, fresh and brilliant that is so positive and so attractive to those outside our industry. What if a wider range of potential riders flocked to motorcycles simply for the promise of two wheeled freedom, our awesome community and the sense of adventure that powersports, in all its glory, offers?

To me, success in this new norm looks like accepting the market for what it is: an opportunity. An opportunity to redefine ourselves as an industry, moving away from lamentation and into acceptance of the new era of the consumer-to-business customer model outlined by Dr. Paul Leinberger? Instead of spending a fortune for research to tell us what is wrong with the industry, what if we spent that fortune telling the world what we love about this industry and how the products make us feeeeel?

The $10 Billion Self-Improvement Market talks about the idea of using mindfulness to change your habits of thinking. When done over a long enough period of time, science has proven you can actually change the neural pathways in your brain and change the way you think and react to stimuli.

What if we, as an industry, employed this simple mindfulness technique and every time we started to beat the drum of what was. What if we changed the refrain before those words came out of our mouths? What if we all started chanting in unison that the industry is right where it is supposed to be, and that we now have this glorious opportunity to reinvent ourselves as a fun-loving and dynamic industry, rather than a dangerous and decrepit one? What if we never uttered those depressing and disempowering words again? What would that look like for us industry-wide?

Success to me looks like a fun and engaged industry, with consistent messaging that gets people excited about the experience they can have on two wheels. So excited that no matter what the tough and tedious class threw at them, they were eager to see it through and get their license, even if they had to take the training class a second time.

I see success as changing the current thinking so that motorcycling safety training becomes an experience which boosts confidence and provides a way to be actively engaged in your own life. I see success as there being equal numbers of men and women riders. I see success as a new generation of children growing up with an outdoor lifestyle that transitions them for two wheels... and I see success as an industry where new ideas thrive and blossom.

Success is an industry in which we shake off the old stories and embrace the new narrative, whatever that might be, for our bright and shiny future.