

The Bike Ride (II)

By: Charlie Cates, CPT, PES

<http://selfmadefitness.com>

charlie@selfmadefitness.com

Last month I gave you the first two lessons I was taught from the bike ride, a journey I took with my father and that all the males in my family take. As a recap, the first two lessons were to have a beginner's mind and left foot right foot, i.e., break large tasks down into smaller steps. In this article I will give you the final three lessons I was taught.

I don't know if I could have done that bike trip alone. Actually, let me rephrase that. There is no way at the age of thirteen that I could have made that trip alone. Physically, I felt alright the first day and the second morning, but after breakfast on that second morning I felt absolutely terrible. It wasn't that the pace was any harder than it was before or that I needed a break to rest my legs. We had just eaten breakfast so I was refueled and ready to go, but when we got to what was going to be our next stop that morning we found the establishment to be closed down due to a fire in the previous weeks. That was it, that little moment when I found out I wasn't going to get a rest that my mind was craving, and I lost it. I broke down crying on the side of the road, not wanting to go any farther. After feeling really good that morning it seemed as if the end was near, when in reality we were just half way done. Like I said, physically I was alright, but mentally I was shot. I wanted so badly to be done with this journey that I was unable to control my emotions when I realized how far I still had yet to go. But after a few minutes passed I realized that the only thing I wanted more than to be done with this journey was to complete this journey, and I surely wasn't about to let this opportunity to join the rest of my family in having completed the journey pass me by. So with a newly controlled set of emotions I allowed the unintended family pressures from those both present and not to toughen my mind and force me back on my bike.

This right here is the third lesson the bike ride taught me, to have others in your journey to hold you accountable. Some of us are able to hold ourselves accountable through almost anything. Others are too scatter-brained or unmotivated to get anything done unless somebody else's wellbeing is in jeopardy. When it comes down to it, you need to be able to do things for yourself, but some people need that outside pressure in order to be able to do anything of great significance. This can often be seen in the health and fitness industry where numerous people will go to the gym to "work out" on their own with little to no results. But as soon as they get somebody to hold them accountable for their attendance and their effort, i.e., a trainer or a training partner, they are finally able to achieve the results they desire and are able to get so much more out of their time in the gym.

About halfway through the first day the ride was starting to seem long with each pedal seemingly getting me no closer to my goal. I could feel that my mind was starting to lose focus on pushing myself as my legs began to tire. It was at this

point that a song popped into my head, and it stayed there for the rest of the trip. Normally, I would have been annoyed that a song was stuck in my head, but this time it was a relief. By repeating the words to the song over and over and focusing on the lyrics, it allowed me to take my mind off of the dull, monotonous spinning of my feet. This is the fourth lesson I was taught by the bike ride, to find a distraction method when coping with difficulties. Find something that is easy enough on your mind so as not to take away from the physical effort put forth, but is challenging enough to keep your interest. Finding a distraction method can relieve you from the grind of the task you are facing for a moment or two, but don't rely too heavily on such a technique, as doing so will rob you of actually experiencing the journey and the beautiful struggle that is life.

That second morning when I woke up in my tent I was freezing and starving. The calendar said July, but it might as well have been January. I could see my breath and my ears and nose were terribly cold. I didn't want to get out of my sleeping bag, but I knew I had to because regardless of how cold and hungry I was there were miles to be ridden before I could eat. And not just any miles, but miles that would allow my father and I to crack the century mark on our journey. Cracking the century mark before breakfast is a lifestyle choice that is rarely put into practice in today's society. Instead of waking up early and putting in work, we hit the snooze button multiple times before crawling out of bed in a daze and spending the first few hours of our existence every day in a state of lethargy. Finally after our third cup of coffee we are able to function at a level that is slightly elevated from comatose, right in time for our lunch break to start. We waste so much of our time and our lives just trying to get ourselves ready to do something that at the end of the day we hardly get anything accomplished. Most of us have lost our passion for life, which is incredibly disheartening, but we can and will get it back if we are able to find something that is actually worth doing. Then we will be able to attack each day with the energy and focus that life deserves to be lived with. So get to sleep early, wake up early, and crack the century mark before breakfast. Make a commitment to accomplishing something of significance, make a commitment to the ride, and make a commitment to the journey. This is the final lesson.

Get big or die tryin'.

Charlie Cates
Self Made, Owner

Charlie Cates is the owner and head performance coach of Self Made (<http://selfmadefitness.com>), and is a Certified Personal Trainer and Performance Enhancement Specialist through NASM. He has worked with athletes of all ages and ability levels, from 9-year-old kids to NFL MVP's. He can be reached via e-mail at charlie@selfmadefitness.com.

This article may be reproduced with biographical information intact.