



# BULLETIN

## JULY 2008

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## What is Knowledge without Desire to Learn?

by Paolo Volpara OMM 2008

*"The road to happiness goes through controlling and overcoming fears".* I was sitting on a boat in one of the bays of Fethiye Gulf, contemplating the misery of sailing, when a simple statement from one of the guests aboard struck my attention.

I stopped dreaming of asphalt and corners and the voice of Aristotle resounded across the centuries *"More than anything else men and women seek happiness."*

*"And what is your fear? I asked- and How did you overcome it?". "I have always been afraid of heights, of looking down from high places, of being suck into the void... so when I was in Africa at the Victoria Falls I decided to take the [111 meters bungee jump to the Zambezi river](#) that, being among the highest jumps in the world, had all the chances to cure the fear".*

The new friend then continued in telling about the experience with a positive conclusion. *"Back home in Belgrade I walked to the window on my seventh floor apartment. Usually a simple look down would give me panic and dizziness... now it was simple... could have jump down easily (and die) or safely with a good bungee. Fear was gone"*

The beauty in this story is the attitude that it reveals: the desire to reach happiness by overcoming ignorance (fear is the anticipation of the unknown, the result of a level of not-knowing, ignorance)

An old trick (maybe corny and definitely only for English language) invites to match each letter of the (English) alphabet with the value of numerical sequence:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

In this way motorcycle would be 129, definitely better than automobile at 113.

Strangely, by using the same method, "skills" comes only at 82, our fourth sphere "knowledge" at 96, "hard work" at 98 but "attitude" scores a full 100.

An unusual way to remember how attitude is important in the knowledge process. It is called "desire to learn" or "learning attitude" and without it the knowledge at disposal is not accessible, not used, not visible. In absence of a question, it is impossible to find and to see the answer. Or, if you like it more philosophical, *"there nothing more absurd than an answer to a question that has never been asked"*

True in life, true in biking: Bill Knowing is a popular biker that we meet often in our rides. He knows it all: there is no motorcycling skill that he does not know and does not practice. Watching Moto GP Bill can infallibly tell gear,



speed, pilot action, techniques used: he is on the virtual saddle and knows it all.

When kicking tires with the group, Bill is very vocal and always ready to suggest *"a better way of dressing, of riding, of braking..."*

Start the ride and Bill is lost and dangerous; high speed combined with low skills creates strange situations and Bill 'has the attention span of a lightning bolt'.

Always out of line in corners, unbalanced on bike, harsh on brakes and throttle, placing himself and the co-riders in a tense status of permanent risk. But when the stop comes and friends comment on his erratic behavior, Bill has always a ready excuse: if not the tires the other road users (*did you see that... trucks? All in my line...*), if not the bike the road conditions, if not the weather the fatigue (*we have been riding for too long... I like to stop every 50k...*)

Bill misses a learning attitude to the point that, when a generous friend suggest a new way of doing things on two wheels, the answer (you guessed) is always the same: *"I know it and... it does not work... for my style"*.

Proof that the learning attitude comes from two sources: the desire to excel in doing things and the humility of self evaluation.

If it is true that *"Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work"* the commitment to excellence, to be good in doing, is the first engine moving the learning attitude.

The curiosity to know how to do it better, the passion for other people's experience, the respect for teachers, the endless search for an higher level: all this combined with the desire to apply what learned, the discipline of trying new, previously unknown, paths.

In this way the learning bikers ride every time with a bag of learning, eager to apply the new, compare it with the old and embrace change.

Still, *"Man can not improve unless he is aware of his current situation"* and the humility of self evaluation is the second engine moving the learning process.

Satisfied of himself, full of appreciation for his own skills, Bill *'is a self-made man and worships his creator'*. As such he cannot recognizes external experience or authority and, as such, he is excluded from the profound cycle of learning.

Bill will grow old, remembering the good time he had when he was showing to all his knowledge of motorcycling, to paraphrase Winston Churchill *"a modest little biker, with much to be modest about"*.



## ■ Why We Ride? the Joy of Motorcycling

by Stephen M. John @ MSN Autos

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Sent to me by an North American friend, the following article looks more like a compilation of messages in Internet board, The author, Steve John, is credited as avid bibliophile and lifetime motorcyclist who raced in various motorcycle series and events, including stunts in multiple classes at the Isle of Man TT. I personally liked most of the ideas and the casual, cool way of expressing them. Readers of OMM bulletin can mail me their "reasons why they ride" and I will keep, if material suffices, the section open for three month.

*"Released from the steel cage of the automobile, motorcyclists experience scenery firsthand, rather than through the frame of a vehicle windshield.*

*What attracts people to motorcycling?*

*When faced with the numerous personalities of both riders and motorcycles, there may not be a single answer.*

*Despite the differences between touring rider and hill climber, chrome-encrusted cruiser and nimble Grand Prix race biker, there are some universal attributes that get under the skin of the motorcyclist and feed the desire to ride.*

*Freedom is often cited as an attraction, but what does that mean? Compared to driving a car, riding a motorcycle offers freedom from the constraints of four-wheeled physics. When a car negotiates a turn, it leans to the outside of a corner, struggling to maintain its former direction of travel. A motorcycle leans into the corner.*

*This may not sound like much, but until you've experienced both you can't understand the superior grace and simplicity of this mode of travel.*

*Cornering becomes a symphony of precise movements instead of an awkward wallow, working in harmony with the road instead of fighting it tooth and nail.*

*Once freed of your steel cage you are thrust into the world to experience a broader existence unfettered by HEPA filters and climate control. Your nose will get a vivid introduction to skunk roadkill and diesel exhaust, but will also revel in bread baking and plants blooming. Your body will feel the thousand tiny impacts of raindrops and absorb the buffeting of the wind. Your skin will feel the gently warming temperature as you crest a hill and drop to the valley floor below. You are no longer huddled behind a wheel disconnected from nature. It's Lawrence of Arabia in Cinerama versus a daguerreotype of a camel.*

*While motorcycling you are still fully engaged with the outside world, but the rest of your brain is free to explore paths otherwise unavailable. With your mind free of rigid supervision and self-awareness, all sorts of problems get solved in the background and tension evaporates. Exactly the opposite happens in an automobile. Driving makes so few demands on our minds and bodies we go on autopilot. How many times have you driven to a familiar location, and arrived only to realize you don't remember large parts of the journey?*



*Wrap all this freedom in a lovely ribbon of performance, and you get what experts call fun. Not the fake hood scoop, chrome wheels and racing stripe school of performance. Picture instead a carrier launch and you'll be in the right neighborhood, and you don't even have to pledge seven years of service. Best of all, this astounding performance is dirt cheap. For less than half the cost of most commuter pods you can buy a stock motorcycle capable of 9-second quarter miles. Don't bother figuring the cost for a production car with matching performance, because you won't find one. AMG teamed with Mercedes to make the CLK-GTR capable of a 9.4 second quarter mile, and it's a steal at a measly \$1,000,000. Performance cars do have the edge in aerodynamics and top speed, but to use them you'll need lottery winnings and the Autobahn.*

*All of this freedom and fun doesn't come without a price. First of all, you have to learn how to ride. Given the right training and the right attitude, the skills can be acquired by just about anyone. Want proof? One of my first forays was on my dad's 1975 Honda CB125S, a ride so mild it's hard to believe it could burn gasoline. I was so overwhelmed I couldn't remember how to stop, and ended up using a conveniently located pickup to do the job. Fortunately the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) runs well-organized classes where you can safely learn motorcycling in a pickup-free environment.*

*What about practicality? Over the years I've carried a turkey, two-by-fours, a dozen roses, crutches and a bookcase on a motorcycle, but even I haven't tried transporting an infant or a major appliance. But how often do you really use the cargo capacity of a four-wheeler? Not often, judging by the throngs of single-occupant vehicles choking the roadway, wasting gas and time hauling around a sluggish, three-quarter-empty steel box.*

*Finally, there's the favorite of mothers and fathers everywhere: danger. On a motorcycle you are more vulnerable and you'd better accept that fact and ride accordingly. I always ride as if I am invisible to the sea of cars around me, because all too often it's true. I wear a helmet, jacket, boots and gloves regardless of the temperature or length of the ride. You might think it's a hassle just to reach the corner store, and it does take more time than slipping on a seat belt. For me it is an important ritual, a reminder I am about to engage in an activity with a fair amount of personal risk. Donning my helmet triggers a pre-recorded message telling me I'd better be alert if I don't want to end up as a hood ornament.*

*Risk is inherent in motorcycling, but it can be managed and turned into an advantage, one that I think is the real long-term attraction of riding. A new rider must gain experience, since at first everything you have is spent just keeping upright. Gradually, shifting gears and scanning for Dozy Joe Auto blowing through a stop sign takes less effort as your brain adjusts to a new sensory plateau"*



## The Spirit of Riding

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In previous bulletins we introduced the "idea-competition". to find the best route from the Bosphorus (Istanbul) to the Channel (Calais).

This route allows a lot of diversions offering the central itinerary from Europe (south, central, and north) to Turkey. I have continuous requests of suggestions from riders coming to our Country and from Turkish riders planning to visit Europe.

We asked to send your experience [by e-mail](#) and the registered entries will get an OMM T-Shirt.

The idea is not to find the quickest route but the "best one for bikers" in terms of fun and practicality.

## OMM Events Ahead

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	Ankara	Bursa	Istanbul	Izmir
06 Jul 08				RoadCraft Ride
12 Jul 08			Ara Road National	
13 Jul 08			Ara Road National	
09 Aug 08			Ara Control	
30 Aug 08			RoadCraft Ride	30th Aug Touring
13 to 18 Sep 08	* * *	Black Sea Master Ride for Members	* * *	
20 Sep 08			Ara Road International	
21 Sep 08			Ara Road International	
22 Sep 08			IAM Membership Ride	
23 Sep 08			IAM Membership Ride	
24 Sep 08			IAM Membership Ride	
27 sep 08		RoadCraft Ride		Ara Road I'ntl
28 Sep 08				Ara Road I'ntl
29 Sep 08	RoadCraft Ride			
04 Oct 08			Ara Control	
11 Oct 08			RoadCraft Ride	RoadCraft Ride
18 Oct 08			Ara Road National	
19 Oct 08			Ara Road National	
15 Nov 08			RoadCraft Ride	
30 Nov 08		* * *	Opening of CAT 2009	* * *
13 to 14 Dec 09		* * *	OMM Rally for 2009 Plans	* * *

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The OMM Calendar and list of activities is presented in [www.ommriders.com](http://www.ommriders.com) and invitations are sent to the ARA Yahoo Group open to everybody who wants to sign up at <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/AdvancedRidingAcademy>

OMM communities are riding in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Bursa.