

## June 2016 Safety Article: Keep Your Eye on the Prize

One of my all time favorite personalities is Yogi Berra. I was recently reading through a book of many of the quotes that made him famous. One of them struck me right between the eyes and made me wonder how great of a motorcycle rider he may have been: "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else." This quote is often used in the business world as a motivator for documenting and tracking an accurate business plan. With a plan, we can be more efficient with our work, and ultimately more profitable, but did you know that it also applies to motorcycling?

Learning and practicing efficiencies in handling your motorcycle will make it more fun, as you make your rides safer, and ultimately become capable of handling aggressive maneuvers. I'm a huge proponent of continuing education and learning as much as practical on a wide range of topics, but somehow the topics usually end up being something about motorcycling. It is vital for all of us to increase our knowledge of how to better handle a motorcycle and the risks that are associated with the sport. One of the key ways to help manage the risk is by doing one simple thing with every turn: having a plan, knowing where you are going, and working the plan.

Failing to see an end result of an action can lead to catastrophic consequences. In one of my recent articles, I discussed the actions in efficiently navigating turns on a motorcycle by using the steps "slow, look, lean, and roll". The "look" component means to infer far more than just simply "seeing" the curve. Being a proficient motorcyclist, one understands that it means looking through the turn and beyond, into what may be another potential turn. This allows you to better set up yourself and your bike for the next kink in the road, and the next, and so on.

We have all hit a curve when coming in way too hot which caused us to be completely out of position for being safe. Those moments of distraction that led up to that are symptomatic of motorcycling. It is hard to keep your situational awareness levels consistently high during an extended period of riding and your body's movements need to be in sync with needs of your bike. Taking advanced riding courses will help you identify weak spots in your riding technique, teach you how to not only look where you are going, but see through to where you are going and go there. They teach you how to have a plan for each curve, know where you are going through the curve, and then work that plan. It teaches you effective habits for creating muscle memory to keep you safe. They even teach you how to lean with the curves so you can keep your balance as the curve tries to force its will upon you and throw you off!

There are multiple resources available to you for learning how to better handle your motorcycle. If you are new to motorcycling, check with your dealer about entry level classes. You will not be disappointed in the tips and tricks that you never realized you didn't know. Been on a bike a while but still struggling a bit? The Missouri Motorcycle Safety Program has multiple mid-level and advanced classes that will build on the fundamentals you learned in your basic riding class. Feeling like you are too proficient of a motorcyclist to learn more and that taking a class is below you? Well, for your sake and the safety of others, let's not presume that is the case.

Be smart with your riding. Learn how to be a smarter, safer, and more efficient rider. Know where you are going with your bike and look through to that place, or you might just end up somewhere else! If you do, say "Hi!" to Yogi for me!

....and "Hey! Let's be CAREFUL out there!"