

Rider Education Report

Throughout my whole life I have been told over and over to go faster, hurry up, or just get it done. When I got my first job with taxable income in 1984, one of the first criticisms I received was because I was trying to go fast. “The faster you go, the further you get behind” I was told, and yet it was also made clear to me that the time it took me to make pizzas during the dinner rush was nowhere near fast enough. Sometime around 2010, I was informed by my supervisor that if I never made any mistakes, I would never get behind in my daily work. But, he continued, you make mistakes when you hurry. Even outside of work, the little voice in my head would tell me to rake those leaves faster to leave enough time to clean up, eat dinner, do the dishes, catch my favorite show, and still get to bed on time. I would start out sweeping the lawn just as fast as I possibly could to get the area clear of leaves. But every time I started fast, I would find myself perspiring and breathing heavily, I would get anxious to finish, and my energy level would be sapped in no time.

All these life experiences keep replaying in the back of my head. Until there is an epiphany, like the feeling you get during the last two or three moves completing a Rubik’s cube. After working and working, trying countless combinations of moves, you can see you have the solution, and you complete the puzzle with every piece in place. This exact thing happened on the way back from the Virginia Rally. I am not exactly sure where or when, but it happened. And I realized that riding a motorcycle well is very much like working well. You must slow down to go faster.

When you “slow down to speed up,” you allow yourself to take a steadier pace in exchange for a greater degree of control and focus over your work as a whole. The first set of twisties we came to on the ride home was a perfect place to test this idea. So, I slowed down. I worked to develop a rhythm of checking the GPS for the road ahead, checking the road signs, checking my speed, checking the road surface, and checking on my friends in the group behind me. I repeated this process over and over, turn after turn. I found that although I had started at a slower speed, I was getting down the road faster, more comfortably, and with less stress. Slowing down allows me to concentrate on everything I have learned in the Advanced Riders Course. I tried this when raking leaves. I set myself into a steady rhythm and focused on moving the rake one swipe at a time, steady and methodical. I found I can clear more lawn in less time with less fatigue, with plenty of energy remaining to move all the piles of leaves off of the lawn and into the woods.

Trying to work faster and faster ultimately will result in cut corners, missed details and lower quality, which often results in having to go back and redo what was done wrong the first time, lowering productivity. Focusing on only riding as fast as possible may result in data overload for many riders. To compensate, greater physicality is required, resulting in fatigue occurring early in the ride. More targets arriving faster increases stress and the likelihood of missing one or more. Missed targets may result in undesirable consequences, for which there is no do-over, and have a devastating effect on productivity.

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