



## SEEing Things In Reverse

“We are the first defense for our safety ...”

MANY OF US HAVE HEARD OF THE ACRONYM SEE (Search, Evaluate, Execute) promoted by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) as a strategy to use when riding. The process works well, is effective, and each

word/action corresponds properly in order. Now, if we were to change the word for each letter of the acronym to Skills, Education, and Ego, SEE would still work, but the proper order would be reversed.

Ego. This is probably the hardest one to conquer. There are plenty of riders out there who feel they are far better motorcyclists when it comes to riding than they really are. My opinion is reinforced almost every time I teach a BRC2 (formerly known as Experienced RiderCourse (ERC)). There is usually a good percentage of the class that struggles with a few exercises, and sometimes all of them. Keep in mind that out of the nine exercises we review, eight of them come from the Beginner's RiderCourse (BRC). Basically, the only difference between the exercises is that the experienced riders use their own bikes. There are skills we teach beginners that even folks who have been riding for some time have trouble doing. Having experience is not the same as having skills. The problem is in how we recognize that our skills aren't up to par. Restraining our egos to honestly look at ourselves and our capabilities when it comes to riding a motorcycle would definitely be a good

start. Most people with a sense of balance and a combination of coordinated motor and mental skills can learn to ride a motorcycle, and, with some practice, ride reasonably well. But to be able to operate that machine correctly and to minimize risk factors takes skill, and the best way to achieve those skills is through education.

Education. I have never had a student in the BRC2 tell me that the course was a waste of time or that he didn't learn anything. When it comes to motorcycle riding you can always learn either a new skill or how to enhance the ones you have. There are a lot of statistics floating around, but one that seems to be somewhat consistent is the one that states that a high percentage of motorcycle crashes involve riders with no motorcycle riding education. That should be a clue that there's room for improvement. I know many people have considered taking a course of some variation but have always had an excuse as to why they didn't. One unspoken reason, and this is an assumption on my part, is that they fear dropping the bike during an exercise, whether it's because they're afraid of scratching something or letting their ego get bruised from

dropping a bike in front of others. Keep in mind that if the bike drops, it's because you were going at the rate of 0 to 2 mph with no power to the rear wheel. How much damage could come from that? Besides, I'd much rather a rider have an oops! while taking a class where he can learn what he did wrong than out in the street with a possibly worse outcome. Also consider this: many are more willing to pay \$300 for a chrome part than \$100 to improve their skills. It's been said before: chrome won't get you home.

Skills. So we squashed our egos enough to realize we could use a bit of improvement, and we headed out and took a riding class so now we're skilled — or are we? Just because you learned what skills are needed and how to use them doesn't make you a skilled rider. You need to practice what you learned to make those skills change for the better, and riding around isn't practice. If you do not take the time to make skills such as quick emergency braking or swerving instinctive, they will not be there when you need them the most. So practice, practice, practice, and when you get the skills down pat, keep practicing to keep them.

We are the first defense for our safety, and the best way to minimize risk is by improving our skills, through education, and always keeping our ego in line. No matter what, when we look at SEEing things, it's always a step, or a ride, in the right direction.

Keep it safe out there and keep learning. **AIM**