

Final Thoughts:

1

One of the most amazing things along the ride became the awareness of all the stuff along the roadside; most amazing were the single shoes on the roadside. It was never a pair, just one shoe, a sandal, or a boot, or a sneaker, or... myself. Out on the road alone was like being a single shoe, in fact a lot of my life felt like a lonely shoe. But that is not true, was never true, not for myself or for any of us. Yet, it is incredible easy to become a lonely shoe and build barriers to block the hurts of the world.

But it doesn't mean that is truth. The hurts we receive are only that much worse because we think we receive them alone. When one begins to open up, and receives everything with a heart wide we begin to look at all events with compassion towards others, but most importantly ourselves. We realize we are ever and always doing work on the inner world. When we feel wronged it is not because of someone's actions but how we feel inside, how we react inwardly. And when we feel love the same is true as well. Whomever it is that puts you in that space is simply reminding you that that space always existed within.

In a very real sense it is always about me! But not in the egotistical, the more work I do on me to reach a higher awareness the more understanding I have toward others. The more love I have for myself means I am able to direct more love toward others, and then the world changes. Each and every one of us can do this. Even those lonely shoes on the road had each other.

2

The day I arrived in Eden, I thought I was done with bicycle touring. I thought of selling the panniers and just never going that kind of distance again. Three days later I was planning my next excursion. I don't know where that will be yet, but I keep planning. It is like they say; the road gets in your blood and you yearn to be out there. It definitely changed me. I look at the road differently now. A hill is just not a hill anymore because I think in terms of how long it would take to bicycle up it with full panniers. A mile is no longer a just a mile, it is an experience. Would I do it again? Absolutely! Am I glad I went? Absolutely! Would I trade any of it, absolutely not! I say everyone should have their own little break from their comfortable reality. I believe everyone needs to do that one great thing, over and over.

The road taught me a lot about myself that is just beyond words because it is so much about feelings. The road made me crazy! I went from despair to rage, to wanting to beat the bike into a mass of twisted metal.. I obsessed about the lack of the Ativan. I had forgotten memories return. I talked to myself regularly. I talked to God regularly. I recognized the importance of family and connectedness, and most importantly I learned surrender. I reached inside, rushing to the edge of all the mental garbage and let go. And finally left it along the roadside with all the single shoes.

Everything is exactly as it should be.

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Final, Final Thoughts, Six Months Later

I have realized there are no final thoughts. The ride to Maine of August '06 continues to affect me, creating change. I had thought I had left old issues along the road, coming to terms with them. Many of them I have. Many lessons still burn bright in my mind's eye, but many still are left to learn. I had thought there was a beginning and an end, but that doesn't seem to be the case. It seems there is a beginning, then another beginning, and then another, but never an end because we are always in the process of becoming. Each beginning is an extension of the last one before it; we grow and evolve constantly, spiraling upwards toward our highest and best self.

In the months following the ride, I reached points where I had to admit some pretty hard stuff to myself as well as to others. I had to take a good look at my trust issues and admit I had not made much progress with letting people get close emotionally. I had to look at my past behavior and trace a line along the points where I had shut others out. Intellectually, I know the path to take, the path to letting go of all the beliefs that just don't work. Emotionally though, that simple letting go is a leap across a chasm a mile wide and a mile deep. True letting go is facing that chasm and believing one can fly, jumping from the edge with a smile. True deep knowing, true soul wisdom...is that the chasm is not there at all. Nor is the need to let go even necessary because there is nothing to let go. All that exists exists because that is where we put our attention. Stop paying attention to a belief and it goes away. But we love our beliefs; they keep us company and justify our actions, so we keep giving them life.

At this moment, I am aware of the box I live within, and that is the first step. Awareness is the key to change. I have seen that even the idea of awareness can be a deception though because I thought I was being aware. I thought I had opened those closed places, and I had, to an extent, but not as far as I had thought. Maybe that is the problem, I think too much and just don't feel enough, but again, thinking too much is just one of my many boxes. Time to lighten the load.

And how do we lighten the load when we feel we threw those un-needed boxes away ages ago just to find them stuffed in the back of the closet? It is mind contemplating mind to un-contemplate mind, which is kind of how the mind looks at it because the mind, being connected to ego, likes to think highly of itself. Whew! I look at it this way, as an example. I went on this vision quest to find 'something', change my name and be 'something'. I get mixed reactions to the name change. Some people just don't get it and rebel at the idea of changing one's name; maybe it has to do with one of those boxes we so like to cling onto. For me, a name is just a reference point. It allows others to address me but I often do not associate myself with my name. My name is not who I am, I could be called Fred and still be the same person. This part is easy for me, not associating with the pains of the past is harder and not to associate with those tribulations seems to somehow take a part of me away. It questions my loyalty to my mother mostly I think, and to a lesser degree, makes all of my medals of wrongs and hurts and pains meaningless.

In the end, they are nothing but reference points. They exist only because I still believe those events are happening in this present moment. They are not, they are just a box of memories, a box of old photos one can pull out and then reminisce about the good old days, no matter how good or bad they were. It is the mind in its full glory but it is not who I am or who you are, it is just the illusions of the mind. But what powerful illusions if we believe that is who we are.

In the end...they are nothing but reference points.

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Gratitude

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