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Perception is Everything  
per-cep-tion [per-sep-shuhn]  
noun

1. Awareness, comprehension or an understanding of something.

I know that there a lot of motorcyclists out there that still subscribe to the F%#k The World mentality. What did we care if the cage drivers didn't understand us and didn't want to talk to us? That was great. It kept them out of our world and they left us alone. In the past, it worked to our advantage to have "John Q. Citizen" see us all as outlaws who had better not be messed with for fear of stirring up a hornet's nest. Well, the times they are a changin'. The public no longer fears us but merely perceives us as a nuisance on the public roadways. When they hear us rev our motorcycle to its full volume or see us dart in and out of traffic, what else are they suppose to think? The numbers of ordinances that now target motorcycles because of the public outcry should make it painfully obvious to us that the days of the non-riders idly standing by and letting us do our thing are long gone. The townspeople are now banding together with their torches and pitchforks in hand and storming our castle to burn down the motorcycle monster which strikes fear into their quiet lives. We need to change the public perception of motorcyclists or we will be legislated out of existence.

The American Motorcyclist Association tried to turn the tide years ago when they proclaimed that "99% of all of their members are law-abiding citizens and only 1% are outlaw". The problem is that motorcyclists didn't use that moment to their advantage and the public didn't buy it. With the onslaught of biker movies that came out after that portraying us as criminals, the public still saw motorcyclists as bad only now having the 1%'ers to call the "worst of the bad". And Harley-Davidson did their part to dump some fuel on the fire as well. They saw their opportunity to capitalize on this public perception and make a fortune marketing the "bad-ass" image while we enthusiastically lined up to unload our money to become something that the public would fear.

Those of us who ride because we feel it in our souls know that we will never be able to make the non-rider understand what makes us tick. They will never understand how some of us would choose our rides over oxygen if we were forced to make the choice. This lack of understanding has lead to the "us" versus "them" mentality which has forced the non-rider to base their opinions and perceptions on nothing more than the hyped up Hollywood stereotype or the rider who's seen as a terror on the roadways. Every time we rattle the windows on someone's home or blaze by someone on the highway at 100 miles per hour, we reinforce the public's perception of us as "outlaws" and widen the gap between us. All we do is create another enemy to battle in our ongoing fight for freedom.

We need to regulate ourselves. Do you really need to blast your exhaust at full volume at 6 AM? Do you really need to go 90 MPH? Do you really need to dodge in and out of traffic maybe making someone else slam on their brakes? We need to ride with the same consideration that we expect from everyone else. If we don't, we create the public perception that we somehow feel entitled to break the laws that everybody else has to follow which creates resentment. I would rather have the public with me rather than against me while I fight for our privilege to ride. We need to regulate ourselves or the government will do it for us.

What public perception do you create while you're out riding? Portray a positive one and we'll create some more allies for the impending battles ahead.

Until next time - Enjoy life!

*Send Us Your Stories, Events,  
Pictures, Ideas, Jokes, ETC.  
We Would Love To Hear  
From You....*

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