

Some thoughts from Kat:

I was recently asked how I felt about my kids being around bikers, bikes and 'the lifestyle'. The person asking was not a biker, didn't get it and was trying to make me feel as if my choices were harmful to my children. Yeah, there you go - mess with the Momma Bear! Let me hand you a stick so's you can poke at her, eh? There are pros and cons to the life of a biker. I'm a bit bias and would have to say the pros far outweigh the cons.



Now, I can't speak for ALL situations, riders, bikes and the like. I can only speak on me and mine. But you can bet your ass that's what I did. And let me be clear - I am careful as to what my kids are exposed to. No bars, no parties (may sound like a given, but you'd be surprised). You cuss in my home and the kids joke that I will hit you upside your head. No smoking allowed in my home, my car nor around my kids.

I have 3 kids. A 9 year old girl, a 10 year old boy and my 16 year son that is my angel in heaven.

All of my kids think I am not a "regular" Mom, and that's OK with me. My kids thinks Mom is beautiful, tough, creative, kind and don't let things get her down. They see me involved in things that were once considered a "man's world". I wrench a bit (at one point I was building my own bike in our living room), and although I don't have my own bike these days, I use to ride my own. I take care of things around the house and yard, little jobs to big jobs. To them, these are every day occurrences. They don't see me NOT do things because I am female, they don't see me wait for a man to do things for me. They see me do. Period. I for one think I set an excellent example for them.

I teach my daughter to not be a door mat. To stand up for herself. To not settle for less because she is female. No one will tell her "you can't do that because

you are a girl" - her bar has been set higher than that. She has great self-respect and knows that she too can do whatever she sets her mind to.

My sons have a greater respect for women than most. They have been taught compassion, along with strength. They realize being a woman does not, in any way, mean we are weaker, less intelligent or have less value. My oldest son use to tell people I am one person they do NOT want to piss off. And, as much as I don't see myself in that light, it was nice to know I am seen as a force to be reckoned with under the proper circumstances.

They have had a glimpse into the ugliness that exists in people. The poor judgement, cruelty, backstabbing, loss and sadness. But, as a result, they themselves have found ultimate good in people as well. They are quick to see the glass half-full and are thankful for what they have. They are quick to help, to give, share, donate or sacrifice for those who aren't as blessed as we are.

They are quick to spot a bike along the side of the road and have no problem with us stopping to see if we can help. They comment on the riders, what they are wearing and if they are riding safe and protected. They are also very aware of 'cagers' driving with cell phones up to their ears, commenting how that's not safe. They keep Mom in check when I am driving - "No phone, Mom. And buckle up."

To me, it boils down to what makes them happy. What moves their souls, puts a skip in their step and a smile on their faces. Whatever that is, I encourage them to follow it. If it's hoppin' on a hog and puttin' on the miles.....yahoo!!!! If it's hiking, cooking, writing or music - whatever it is, they are encouraged to incorporate that in their lives in whatever way possible.

They have learned respect. It's a word that gets thrown around quite a bit, but I don't think most realize, or care for, the true meaning. Nor do most implement it these days. Respect is earned, not simply given. And respect, like trust, is a very difficult thing to get back once it has been broken.

My 'cons' are a result of the small-mindedness that exists in society. The misconception of the intellect, financial situation, cleanliness or attitude of those who ride. So sad that some are counted out before the game even starts.

Not sure I won over my friend after this convo or not but the truth is, I don't really care. I have no doubt my kids will grow up to be wonderful adults and contribute much to this world, in whatever way they see fit. Wish I could say that about more kids these days. Whether or not they choose to ride is up to them. Must admit though, I'll be nudging them in that direction, simply because I know how much it brings to MY life.

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FROM THE DESK OF JOE WEIGEL:

For the 21st year in a row, Carlson, Blau & Clemens, S.C. sponsored The Run To The Wall in Washington, D.C. Memorial Day Weekend. A Wisconsin contingent of roughly 200 bikers met at the law office on 37th and Wisconsin in Milwaukee the Thursday before Memorial Day at 8:00 A.M. 48 degrees; rain; windy. As miserable a ride as I have personally had lately. We left the office parking lot promptly at 9:00 A.M. Proceeded toward the freeway and passed 1,000 school children on the south side of Milwaukee waving American flags (which we gave them) and cheering us on. Not a dry eye in the house. Police escort by Milwaukee County Sheriff. Weather improved as the group got closer to Washington, D.C.

Thanks to the Wisconsin Chapter of Rolling Thunder who co-sponsored this year's ride; and will be taking on a strong role in the future.

THE INDEPENDENT SHOP ASSOCIATION