

Maggie's Musings

Learning to Say Yes

July 2005

I live in Colorado and love riding my road bike during the warmer months. While out riding one of my favorite routes I encountered a road that had been recently chip sealed – small crushed gravel laid on a layer of tar that eventually gets packed down. On a road bike it can be deadly in many ways. The sharp gravel rocks can create a flat tire and the loose gravel can cause wheels to slip and slide resulting in a fall. On one nasty stretch I decided to walk my bike along the road hoping it would get better at the top of the hill.

While walking along the road a man in a pickup stopped to ask me if I wanted a ride. For most of my life I've been one of those people who tends to turn down any offer of help. "I can't bother them, I can do this myself. It's not that bad. I don't really need any help." Those are a few of the beliefs I've lived with. I've questioned those beliefs over the years and have found new awareness.

With the truck stopped next to me I knew this was an opportunity to do it differently. Saying "yes" didn't come easily but it came! And what came next was a wonderful surprise. I put my bike in the back of the pickup and hopped in the front seat. Two young boys were sitting in the back seat. I talked to the man for a bit and then turned to talk to the young boys and asked them about their day. They excitedly told me they had been fishing and had each caught five fish. Then the boy's grandfather told me about all the things they had done during their visit from Texas. It was a short 5-minute exchange between strangers. That 5 minutes brought me a greater joy than any bike ride.

The gifts from saying "yes."

- I got a ride to the end of the mile stretch of chip-sealed road and was able to continue on my bike journey with a smile on my face.
- I got to meet two wonderful young boys from Texas visiting their grandfather and hear about their fishing adventure.
- I got to meet a wonderful grandfather who got to share with a stranger all the great things that he was doing with his grandkids.
- I know the man also got something because I know how good it feels to have someone say "yes" to an offer of help.
- Two young boys got to share their excitement of catching fish with a stranger. You can never have too many people to tell your success stories to!
- I got a memory that will last a long time – much longer than the memory of most bike rides.