

# KIRBSTONES

## ALONG THE NARROW WAY

**curb-stone** (kürb'stön') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served <sup>(1)</sup>to hold the material in the roadbed, <sup>(2)</sup>to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and <sup>(3)</sup>to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

<sup>13</sup> "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT.  
<sup>14</sup> BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV

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**B**icycle frame builder, Richard Sachs, shared in a recent publication his thoughts on the importance of the visceral experience of the ride. Remaining on the subject he explained, "On a great bike, I don't need to think about the feel of the steering or give it any attention. I'm not really moving forward if I'm thinking about the bike, if it has a glitch in it. If the saddle's too low, I...raise it."

While Richard Sachs has been building bike frames for decades, he realizes that for a bicycle to fulfill its maximum ability to satisfy the owner/rider, it must do what it does best *unnoticed*, so that the rider enjoys the experience rather than the bike. In Richard's case the bicycle is the vehicle—the *tool*—that provides us with an experience...whatever that experience may be.

We can carry this idea over into every facet of our lives. It helps us focus our energy on the experience, rather than focus on the tool, the technology, or equipment we have at our disposal. Oftentimes the aforementioned item of technology gets in the way of our being able to fully enjoy the experience.

If you are reading **KIRBSTONES** on Kindle, whether on your tablet, phone, or computer, and you are on the internet as most of us are, what happens when we encounter a glitch? We immediately shift our focus to the device, software, or internet connection, and we abandon concentration on what we have been reading. The vehicle, then, becomes a distraction.

Now we have two great examples. (1) Our bikes must fade into the terrific experience of the ride. (2) Our computers, tablets, phones and all software must fade into the background for us to become inspired by something we are reading or watching. There are many others we can cite.

Just as Sachs taught in "This Is What to Look for in a Great Bike," I would like to ask what we should look for in a *great pandemic*. I hear from many folks regarding the misery of the past couple of months. They universally

tell me their lives are upside-down or inside-out, and they have been stopped dead in their tracks. Many persons are consumed with uncertainty, dread, and fear. They stalk news channels, persist in stream-binging nonsense, and peek in the refrigerator every half-hour to see what else is available to eat.

Now, shift the spotlight from the misery of our lives during this pandemic to the experiences we could be enjoying. How could anyone enjoy this deprivation?

How might we focus on the experience instead of the vehicle that fosters our experience? Remember the vehicles? These are (1) the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) the bicycle, or (3) the technology we use to read **KIRBSTONES**? Our personal experiences are the journey!

What would our individual and shared lives look like if we took advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime experience, turned off the television news channel, and stopped running to the refrigerator every few minutes? What would our world look like—*once this pandemic has passed*—if we turned all this time on our hands into opportunities to learn or to grow in some previously neglected areas of our lives? Where can we begin?

Consider starting with what we have as the object or central point of our focus. Is it the pandemic? Is it our perceived misery? Is it our boredom? Imagine moving beyond any of these triggers in our lives toward a focus on the many opportunities before us.

I read recently that waiting reveals what we worship. While we are waiting for the *all-clear* to be able to get back to our sense of normal, are we focused on our former lives? Or, are we looking far out in front of us toward a new beginning fueled by a clear vision?

Peter Flax, "This Is What to Look for in a Great Bike," in *Bicycling*, April 13, 2020.

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**5 "Look at the nations and watch, and be utterly amazed. I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told."  
Habakkuk 1:5 — NIV**