

I could just get a ride with someone who's driving, but I don't... I **like** commuting by bike!



Each May we have Bike To Work Day. That's weird. A Bike To Work "Day." As if it needs a special day because otherwise we'll take it for granted, because otherwise the benefits of riding to work don't matter? Like we wouldn't care about our Moms if there wasn't a "Mother's" day?

Confession. I wasn't always a bike commuter. But today, even if a "ride" is available, I'd rather ride. Why?



Is this the alternative to cycling to work? Not so far-fetched when you think about Google self-driving cars. What's scary is that many think a push-button existence is part of their view of an ideal world.

Because when I ride to work, I arrive feeling like I've already started to engage the world. Riding city streets is "active" when you're on a bike, not just because you're pedaling and working your heart & muscles, but most-important, you're working your brain. You're scanning the street ahead to make sure the roadway's safe; you're keeping an eye out for cars entering from the side, you're watching the stop lights before you get to them, trying to time your arrival so it will be green when you get to it.

If you're lucky, you experience the unmistakable smell of bacon on the way in, and sometimes coffee. Easier to rationalize a stop for coffee (and even donuts) when you're riding. No problem finding parking spaces either!

Even the ritual of removing your helmet and dealing with its effect on whatever hair is left on a 59-year-old head is strangely positive (maybe because there's still something left to comb). All sorts of little details that let you know you're alive, you're on a journey even, and work is just one stop on that journey. Compare that to being entombed in a car, windows rolled up because you don't want anything out of your control, radio on, it could be 40 degrees outside or 85 and it wouldn't matter because you've got climate control, one more aspect of technology to insulate you from the world outside.

We were given muscles to work. Noses to smell. Eyes to see. Ears to hear. "Sensors" on our hands, feet & tail end to feel with. Cycling uses all of them! And when you stop for coffee (and/or donuts), you can engage your sense of taste as well. We were designed to experience, to create, to struggle even. If you don't like that, take it up with the two who got us thrown out of the garden. And if you're thinking about some future state of being, where your body is no longer flesh & blood & bone but rather a connection

between your mind and "the grid", just think about where you'll be next time your Comcast 'net connection goes down, or some virus kills your computer.

There's something to be said for the reliability of a person riding a bike. You push down on the pedal, and it goes. You lean and the bike turns. You apply the brakes and it slows down. It never runs out of gas. You can buy a pretty fancy bike for the cost of a transmission repair (this I know personally) (twice). You don't have to drive around downtown Palo Alto 20 minutes looking for a parking space. But most of all, you're part of the experience. You're not deliberately walled-off from the world. Even your vulnerability reminds you how great it feels to be alive. Look at the faces on the motorists; many appear to be deal already.

All this to explain why I rode to work today, even though Becky was driving anyway. --Mike--