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## What Really Matters to Pat Sherwood

Road warrior leaves home with seven pairs of socks and discovers one of life's great secrets.

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By Pat Sherwood

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Ian Wittenber

Today is my 42nd day away from home and living on a motorcycle. Here's a rough list of everything I have:

- 7 pairs of socks
- 7 T-shirts, 2 pairs of quick-dry lightweight long pants
- 1 pair of jeans (for when I need to look fancy)
- 2 pairs of workout shorts, wrist wraps, a jump rope (broken)
- 1 thermal underwear top, 1 fleece jacket
- Mesh bag to air out dirty clothes on the bike
- Riding boots, flip-flops, Nanos 2.0
- Riding jacket with zip-out liner and rain gear
- Helmet and CrossFit ball cap
- Earplugs
- Sunglasses and hard case
- Gloves
- Toiletry kit
- Camping gear (tent, ground pad, sleeping bag, pillow)
- Folding shovel, machete, tool kit and service manual for the bikes
- Paper maps
- Digital watch and GPS (which doesn't work)
- Spare tire tubes, patch kit and air pump
- WD-40, sunscreen, bug repellent
- Macbook Air, iPad, iPhone and necessary cables and plug adapters for various countries
- Headlamp, spare batteries, Leatherman tool, spare key, two lighters
- Passport and required documents
- Wallet

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That's everything I've been using to support my life since starting this trip. Every now and then, I think about all the stuff—the tons of stuff—I have filling my house and garage at home in Santa Cruz, Calif., and how I have not needed any of it to live and be happy in recent weeks.

What the hell is the point of all the crap I own? I have wanted for nothing on this trip. (OK, well ... Ian Wittenber is great, but having a cool chick on the back of my bike would be pretty sweet.)

I think far too many of us in the U.S., myself included, are so busy working ourselves into an early grave that we don't take the time to truly live and have rich experiences. So, instead of filling our lives with experiences, we fill them with possessions and needless junk. We are concerned with getting the new car, the fancy watch, the latest iPhone, the new tile in the kitchen, etc. Those items simply distract us and give the illusion of happiness until the shine of whatever we bought wears off ... and then we'll need to go buy something else.

One cannot buy enough possessions to fill the holes in life that should be filled with experiences. The amount of money spent over the course of a year, or a lifetime, on things we don't really need is staggering. Take that money each year and go live. Go do something so cool you won't be able to stop talking about it for years to come.

Forty-two days in, I can honestly say I'm not homesick. On our worst days—when nothing has gone right, when we've been hopelessly lost, broken down in the middle of nowhere or soaked to the bone freezing to death in a cold rain—I've never wished that I was back in the comfort and security of my house. Hell, no. Don't get me wrong: I miss my friends. I wish they were here sharing these experiences with me. However, I don't miss the life I left behind.

There's a wonderful and refreshing priority shift taking place in my life. When I was back home living my "normal" life, my precious time was occupied with dumb shit.

Here's an example: we were somewhere in southern Mexico approaching Guatemala and had pulled over for a map check. I turned on my phone to double-check the paper map. Yup, we were on the right road. While I had the Internet up, I checked Twitter to see what was going on in the rest of the world. A Twitter war was raging about whether high-rep Oly lifting was the spawn of Satan or beneficial to fitness. I hate to admit this, but standing on the side of the road, iPhone in hand, I got sucked into the

battle for a few minutes. I was genuinely pissed off about some of the comments, so I wrote a comment or two, and I could feel myself getting worked up. Then I realized what I was doing, immediately stopped following the thread and shut my phone off.

The whole situation hit me like a ton of bricks. Since beginning the trip, my days have been occupied with important questions and new priorities: are we in the right country? On the right road? Where are we going to eat? Where are we going to sleep? How long can we ride without running out of gas and getting stranded? Are we in an area with a heavy drug-cartel presence? What is the kidnapping risk in the upcoming city? Is it too dangerous to ride at night? Will the psychotic traffic kill us? Why doesn't my ATM or Visa card work? Damn, I have no local currency! Try not to get swindled at border crossings. Is that rain? Shit, yes, it's rain.

Standing on that road, scanning Twitter, I immediately realized if I was back in Santa Cruz living my normal life, that particular battle likely would have occupied a decent chunk of my day. I felt like a profound loser for even giving a shit. What a terrible use of my time.

In that moment, I decided to make a concerted effort to give priority to the things in life that are actually worth my attention and effort. I highly doubt that as I lie on my deathbed I will say, "Man, I wish I had gotten more involved in that Twitter battle and spent less time outside truly living."

The list of things I thought I needed to be happy has gotten shorter over the past weeks. I am traveling lighter than I ever thought I could.

What are you carrying on your journey?



### About the Author

*Pat Sherwood works for CrossFit as a flowmaster and member of the Media Team. He's done just under 200 seminars all around the globe for CrossFit HQ and competed in the 2009 CrossFit Games. He hates HSPU and loves ice cream.*