

Here at Cycle Depot we have the amazing opportunity to meet and work with so many bike-minded people everyday. While an endless number of fascinating characters pass through our doors, their reason for throwing a leg over a bike has always been a story worth listening to. More often than not, the story beyond the bike is what really draws our attention. We want to give you a glimpse of some of the people and stories that roll through our door. Some are folks out on the same roads and trails you and I ride. We all have the same common denominator. Bikes are pretty cool and the people who ride them are truly awesome.

Kelly Dolan Canaan, NH



If you ride a bike in the Upper Valley you have most likely been passed by Kelly at some point along the way. From the top of a lift access bike park, to a long grueling road ride, even to a Boston Lot solo session, Kelly keeps the wheels turning. Over the years the reasons and rides have changed but the draw to the bike is stronger than ever.

From our prospective Kelly is a bad-ass. For her, cycling balances personal limits, love, risk, pain, reward, friendship, identity and sanity. Kelly has tested most every discipline cycling has to offer and even taking it to a professional level as a privateer. She can charge hard! Be it up, down and even sideways. Kelly crushes it on a bike. None of it has come easy but that's the reward that consistently encourages keeping the pedals turning.

Kelly is always sharing the simple joy's and passion of riding a bike. She's always willing to offer up friendly advice or teach by example. She has been known to put on trail side workshops for fellow riders; putting on a coaches hat at women's mountain bike clinics, showing the boys at an enduro race the fast line or throwing out a smile and a wave to fellow riders as she's grinding along on a solo ride. Kelly's intensity is no match for her inner little kid that just wants to have fun on her bike, and it shows.

"I associate riding with freedom and adventure. Mountain biking has introduced me to the majority of my close friends and my husband. I love my bike but I love my friends more. Thankfully, I don't have to chose one over the other because both are so intertwined."

"I have always pedaled and cannot remember a time when I did not have

wheels. My parents tell stories about me terrorizing the neighbors, riding my Big Wheel around the house. Not much changed as I grew older but eventually my loops around the house turned into long road rides, cross country races, participating in downhill and enduro events all over the northeast and more recently building dirt jumps in my back yard (because that is what mature adults do)."



2017 laid out a very different path for Kelly. It was the first season in a couple of decades that she did not find herself competing in any type of cycling event. Representing and racing for number of bike shops over the years, putting in tons of work chasing podiums and personal bests, training and racing with an obsessive focus had come to a full stop for her. The news was a bit of a surprise at Cycle Depot. Kelly's presence on race day was huge, win or lose. Her absence was felt by fellow team members and competitors. Despite what people tell you, racing *isn't* everything! Racing is only important if the racer is getting something beneficial out of the experience. They say as long as you're riding, you're doing it right; that's what matters. By no means did her riding yield in any way. It simply changed.



"It was a difficult decision not to race but not for the reasons you might expect. I was tired of the travel, training, and the risk involved in racing pro enduro. I continued to race for a couple of seasons mostly because I didn't want to miss out on the time spent with my competitors and team. People who had become very close friends. We have stayed in touch but it is hard to get together to ride living so far apart. The racing was exciting and fulfilling but the friendships were most valuable to me. Those same people are still part of my riding landscape with or without start and finish lines"

Sharing time in the saddle, you can't help but develop a bond with those around you. You end up building a family on a bike, and becoming consumed in a community that shares the same passion. You find that with every ride, the family continues to grow. Not everything is about bikes but the confidence it inspires transfers to all aspects of life. Aspects and interests that you may have never expected. Kelly has other interests that make an average bike ride look like a walk in the park.

"I had started learning muay thai (Thai boxing) the winter prior to my final race season and it was obvious that I was hooked. It was something new and challenging so I fell in love with it. After so many years focused on cycling it was refreshing to have a new interest. I have been training now for two years and I am hoping to have my first fight this coming February. Like cycling, I have gained amazing friends from muay thai. Now my life has better balance, I was obsessed with cycling to the point it excluded me from branching out and trying new things.

I am still an avid cyclist and it is a huge part of my identity. I find that the early freedom and adventure I experienced on my Big Wheel has returned. I no longer keep track of time or distance when I ride, I just ride. My bike has saved my life, sustained my life, and recently gave me permission to branch out and try new things."

Life is ever changing. It's how we roll with it that makes the difference. Kelly reminds us of that every time she stops into the shop. -R.W.

***"Learn to ride a bicycle. You will not regret it if you live."* -Mark Twain**