

Making our Road Safer:  
The Sandy Johnson Foundation



# Driver-Conditioning The Unexpected Killer



SECOND EDITION

A WORKBOOK for  
Both New  
and Experienced Drivers

Dean T. Johnson

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, over thirty thousand people are killed each year on our nation's highways. An equally staggering figure is the number of injuries associated with vehicle crashes — nearly three million annually.

Because of these statistics, reducing the number of crashes is a high priority for highway officials. While it is important for highway officials to focus on making our roadways safer, it is equally important for us to do our part as well. We, the driving public, need to develop good driving habits in order to help reduce the unacceptable number of deaths and injuries. One way to accomplish this is to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of remaining alert while driving.

In this workbook, you will learn about driver-conditioning and the roll it plays as an underlying cause of accidents at some accident locations. In addition, helpful tips show you how to modify your driving behavior in order to stay more alert when you are behind the wheel.

*“I will never learn by someone telling me what to do.  
I will only learn when I burn my own finger.”*

~ Loise Ouma, RN, BSN,  
Specialist – U.S. Army  
Reserves  
Describing the mindset of  
too many teens and young  
adults.



# **Driver Conditioning**

## **The Unexpected Killer**

**SECOND EDITION**

**A WORKBOOK for  
both New and  
Experienced Drivers**



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# **Driver Conditioning**

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**A WORKBOOK for  
both New and  
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This WORKBOOK serves as an  
Alternative to, or Reference Material for,  
the Internet-Based  
Supplemental Driver's Education Program  
**The Hidden Dangers of Driving**

This internet-based educational program  
is available through  
*The Sandy Johnson Foundation* website:  
**[www.sandyjohnsonfoundation.org](http://www.sandyjohnsonfoundation.org)**





*Also by the author*

# **DANGER ON THE HIGHWAY**

SECOND EDITION

A GUIDE for Motorists and Highway Officials  
Concerned with Improving Highway Safety

A “must-read” for every driver, **The Sandy Johnson Foundation Highway Safety Initiative** provides an easy-to-understand description of the nation’s most prevalent highway killer: ***Driver Conditioning***. In addition, this initiative presents a clear and concise path every highway official can follow to help identify, analyze, and correct, both dangerous, and potentially dangerous, highway locations, more rapidly and at lower cost.

AND

## **THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF DRIVING**

An Internet-Based  
**Supplemental Driver’s Education Program**

Both the GUIDE and INTERNET-BASED program  
are available through

***The Sandy Johnson Foundation*** website:

[www.sandyjohnsonfoundation.org](http://www.sandyjohnsonfoundation.org)



## DEDICATION

This book, as well as all educational material pertaining to *Driver Conditioning*, is dedicated to Sandra Lee Johnson, whose ultimate sacrifice created a pathway to the discovery of Driver Conditioning and the supporting Highway Safety Initiative that bears her name.



Born: February 27, 1956

Died: October 5, 2002

Killed instantly in the intersection of S.R. 310  
and C.R. 25 in Licking County, Ohio.

Making our Roads Safer

The Sandy Johnson Foundation

Cover design and artwork by: Erin Jeffries

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“We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.”

~ Aristotle

## AN OPEN LETTER TO STUDENTS

Although driving is one of the most necessary activities in our culture, it is also one of the most dangerous. So I want to personally commend you for including this program in your pursuit to become a safer, and more responsible, driver.

It is because of the dangers associated with driving that this workbook has been written. Although an internet version is accessible through the foundation website, this workbook can serve a dual purpose. It can be used to accommodate those who prefer a written lesson, or, for those who have completed the internet version, it can serve as easy reference material to provide quick access to the topics being presented.

Regardless of your preference, this text will reinforce the fact that, throughout your life, as you become “comfortable” with the activity of driving, the level of attention you place on your driving and driving environment will naturally be reduced. As you progress through this material, you will learn that the loss of attention on the activity of driving and to your driving environment can quickly lead to a simple mistake which can have catastrophic results.

Beginning at Chapter One, this workbook will present information very similar to the internet version of this program.

But due to the inability to show videos or graphics electronically, there must be some variation in the material being presented. Regardless of that, the content will be close enough to the material presented through the internet-based educational program to serve as an easy reference tool.

Unlike other drivers' educational programs, the information being taught in this course is not necessarily available through other sources, so, when you can, I encourage you to share the information that you learn here with others, even your parents. Since many of the topics you will be learning are being offered for the first time, most experienced drivers are not aware of the message being presented to you through this course.

Above all, I encourage you to take this information and all other material you learn while preparing to earn your license, very seriously. What may seem unimportant today could save your life tomorrow. I don't want you to become a mere statistic on some annual highway report documenting fatalities!

So please pay close attention to this material, and if something seems confusing or is otherwise difficult to understand, feel free to contact the Sandy Johnson Foundation through our website via email and we will do our best to respond to you promptly.

Above all, I want you and your passengers to be safe; and if *you* are the passenger, I hope you will take it upon yourself



to guide others if you witness improper, or otherwise unsafe, driving practices.

Wishing you a lifetime of safe driving experiences,

*Dean Johnson*

Dean T. Johnson, Founder, and President  
The Sandy Johnson Foundation:  
Making Our Roads Safer  
[www.sandyjohnsonfoundation.org](http://www.sandyjohnsonfoundation.org)



## FOREWORD

By: Sandy Spavone

Before meeting Dean Johnson and learning about Driver Conditioning, I thought we had a grasp on the full spectrum of what was needed to adequately address all areas of traffic safety. The general thought was that if we follow safety guidelines, maintain our vehicle properly, and realize that infrastructure and the others we share the road with are also part of our safety bubble, we should be statistically as safe as possible when driving, right? Then, through Dean, I learned about “Driver Conditioning.”

After reading the materials Dean has produced, I no longer look at driving through the same lens. Through these resources, he has opened the eyes of many to the topic of Driver Conditioning. However, this topic is still overlooked in many traffic safety outreach projects. After viewing this material, I believe you will agree with me that this knowledge can be life-changing. It can open our eyes (literally) to the fact that we function on autopilot in many areas of our life and often when behind the wheel.

Going through this handbook you will gain an understanding that driving on a self-imposed autopilot (being conditioned to “expect” traffic patterns road conditionings to remain the same) can void all of the other safety steps we have learned. I believe you will find this handbook to be a new resource on a

topic that, prior to this point, has been overlooked. I also believe a thorough study of this material can make a difference in the way you drive and how you look at road use. It may even save your life or the life of someone you love!

From someone who has experienced loss from an avoidable traffic crash, I am personally very grateful to Dean for his endurance to see this resource, fully developed. I believe his work will touch many lives and make our road use safer. It is my sincere hope that as you use this resource and pass the information you learn on to others, you will develop a comprehensive understanding of Driver Conditioning and come to recognize that you too look at driving through a new lens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andy Davone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "D".

FCCLA Executive Director

## HISTORY

Before we begin our first lesson, I want to tell you how ***The Sandy Johnson Foundation*** got started. Understanding the history of this foundation will help you understand the content of these lessons so, in effect, the “learning” begins, right now!

As you may already know, traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. But did you know that, as of this writing, vehicular crashes are also the leading cause of death for all individuals in the U.S. between the ages of 3 and 34? To expand on that thought, in a survey conducted of both men and women drivers over the age of 55, more than 90% of each group had been involved in a vehicular crash as either a driver or a passenger. And, I’d like to point out that nearly all of those who participated in our survey are still driving. So these statistics will, most likely, end up being even worse. But the point here is this: *very few people make it through life without some mishap occurring while traveling in a vehicle.* The severity of that mishap will determine how you spend the rest of your life.

No one knows that better than I. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002, as I was preparing for work, my wife Sandy was also getting ready to leave. She was going to pick-up her mother, and the two of them were going to a fruit farm just east of Columbus, Ohio. Ironically, as we were making final preparations to

leave, a strange feeling came over me. For a brief moment I felt that she should not be in a car that day; not even for a short trip. Knowing she would leave anyway, I didn't say anything, and left for work a short time later.

While at work, just after noon, I received a phone call from my son. He told me that a state highway patrol trooper and "some lady" wanted to talk with me. I spoke briefly with the trooper on the phone but he refused to tell me the purpose of his visit. Since I was just a few minutes away, I left work and drove home. When I arrived there, both the trooper and the lady were standing on the front porch.

As I approached my visitors, the lady introduced herself in name only and we shook hands. The trooper then introduced himself, and just as our hands began to touch he spoke these words: "Your wife and mother-in-law were in an accident in Licking County and they were both killed." At that moment, life as I knew it came to an abrupt end.

My wife of nearly 23 years, one of the safest drivers I have ever known, died instantly that morning, along with her mother, at 10:59 a.m. because she made a mistake. Sandy had, unknowingly, become a victim of Driver Conditioning.<sup>1</sup>

In this series of lessons you are going to learn about Driver Conditioning and the influence it has over drivers—all drivers; regardless of age, intellect, or experience.

But before we get started on the "teaching" portion of this program, I want to briefly explain why my wife was killed. What happened? What did she do, or what didn't she do, that

led to her death, and that of her mother. My purpose in revealing this to you is to help you understand just how easy it is to make a single, simple, mistake and to help you recognize the consequences that potentially await you when a mistake is made.

Notice I didn't say "...when you make a mistake," but rather "...when a mistake is made." I want to point that out to you because it doesn't have to be *you* that makes a mistake. As I said earlier, Driver Conditioning affects all drivers making it easy to become a victim of someone else's mistake.

In order to discover the cause of Sandy's crash, we need to take a close look at two elements that influenced Sandy's behavior as she was driving that morning. To accomplish that, we are going to evaluate the traffic pattern that was in place at the time of their drive, and we are going to try and understand what may have been going through Sandy's mind as she approached, and began to cross, that final intersection. To do that effectively, we first need to take a mental drive and follow the same path Sandy and her mother took that day in order to evaluate the traffic pattern.

Let's begin....

In addition to city streets, neighborhoods, and freeways, they also needed to travel outside the city and into a rural area. It is there where Sandy lost focus.

As Sandy and her mother left the freeway and began to travel the last 12½ miles of their journey, they drove through a total

of 11 intersections. Eight of those intersections had regular traffic lights while three were a “4-way stop.”

During the first half of their journey, there were two signs warning of a “Dangerous Intersection” ahead. The intersections themselves were not in view when passing the signs and ultimately did not require any action on Sandy’s part—in other words, only side traffic was required to stop.

As they approached intersection number 12, everything changed. The first change that took place was the presence of another “Dangerous Intersection” sign. Their previous encounters with such a sign required no action on the driver’s part, but this time it was different. As the intersection came into view Sandy could clearly see that she was required to stop!

From a distance, she also would have noticed flashing lights that faced all directions, although she could only see the color off the lights facing her. I am sure, at that moment, Sandy immediately made up her mind that the intersection she was approaching was a four-way stop, just like the rest.

As Sandy came to a stop, believing all vehicles were required to do the same, she looked right past a sign saying “*Cross Traffic Does Not Stop,*” and focused, instead, on a car that was approaching from her right with its left turn signal flashing. Since she arrived at the intersection first, in Sandy’s mind she had a choice of either pulling out in front of that vehicle and crossing the intersection or waiting for the approaching vehicle to stop before proceeding.



Sandy decided to wait.

In reality, the driver approaching from her right had the right-of-way and should have pulled into the intersection, waited for approaching vehicles to pass, then executed his turn. But for some unknown reason, he decided to stop short of the intersection—yielding passage to Sandy.

In Sandy's mind, he did exactly what he was supposed to do. So when he stopped, she pulled out. That was the last mistake Sandy ever made.

As the front of her car passed the center of the intersection, Sandy and her mother were struck by a southbound SUV that was traveling at approximately 55 miles per hour. Hitting the driver's side of their vehicle, Sandy was crushed by the impact and her mother's neck was broken; all because Sandy stopped paying attention to her driving environment.

The photograph on the next page shows Sandy's vehicle in its final resting place after the collision. Both she and her mother Jackie remained inside the vehicle while information was collected for the Traffic Crash Report. The emergency medical team shielded their bodies from view by draping sheets over the windows. A body bag was placed on the hood of the car in preparation for transporting the bodies.

Although it is hard to see, the steering wheel, with airbag deployed, is hanging outside the passenger's window—propelled there by the force of the impact.



Crash Scene Photo - October 5, 2002

\* \* \*

So, that is where this all began; a casual drive in the country ended with the deaths of two people. All caused by a loss of focus. All caused because a driver stopped paying close attention to their driving environment and made a mistake.

As we move into our first teaching chapter, I'll introduce you to someone else who made a mistake. Actually, he made a couple of mistakes that ultimately led to the death of an innocent man.

1. Driver Conditioning is defined as *the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance.*

## LESSON 1

## GUILTY!

Before we dive into the material in this module, there are two things I want to do. First, I want to take a moment to reflect back on the history of this program. As you recall, Sandy and her mother were killed instantly when Sandy pulled into an intersection she believed to be a 4-way stop. So clearly, Sandy made a mistake.

But in reality, a lot of mistakes were made that morning. For example, the driver approaching from Sandy's right made the first "physical" mistake. As mentioned earlier, since he had the right-of-way, he should have pulled into the intersection and executed his turn after the car that was approaching had cleared the intersection, but he didn't. Barring another tragedy, if he had exercised his right to continue into the intersection and execute his turn, Sandy and her mother would both be alive today.

But what about the driver that hit them, what did she do wrong? The driver that struck Sandy claimed that she didn't see Sandy's car enter the intersection; so clearly, she wasn't paying attention either. You see, at the moment leading up to that crash, literally, every driver approaching that intersection contributed to the deaths of Sandy and her mother at

some level—each made a small mistake that together contributed to the deaths of two people.

During the introduction, I mentioned the term “Driver Conditioning,” and I said you would be learning about it in this series of lessons. Well, the second thing I want to do before we begin is to introduce you to a young man who learned about Driver Conditioning too late to keep him from making a horrible mistake.

Meet Inmate #A695248.

\* \* \*

*Hi, I too want to congratulate you for taking this important step in helping yourself become a safer driver. I personally believe that if you pay close attention and take this information to heart, you will be one of the safest drivers on the road.*

*I wish I could tell you that by taking this material seriously, you will never be in a collision of any kind but that would be a lie, and that is something I won't do—I won't lie to you.*

*My name is Matthew Cordle. For those of you not familiar with me, let's take just a moment to review my credentials.*

(If the internet is available to you, you may view Matt's confession video on YouTube titled, “I killed a man!” at the following address:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmpK\\_EshSL4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmpK_EshSL4)

If you do not have access to the internet, the following is a partial transcript of that video.)

[Video Message] “I killed a man. I was out with some friends, we were all drinking really heavily, just hopping from bar to bar. I was trying to have a good time and I lost control.

You know, sometimes I drink because I have depression that I struggle with every day and I just drink to get out of my head for a few hours.

... I really don't like the person I become when I drink. I've ruined relationships in the past, I start fights; ...I just generally become a person people don't like being around.

On that particular night, I made a mistake and got in my truck, completely blacked out, and decided to try and drive home, and I ended up going the wrong way down the highway directly into on-coming traffic and I struck a car. I killed a man.

...on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, I hit a killed Vincent Canzani. This video will act as my confession. When I get charged I will plead guilty and take full responsibility for what I've done to Vince and his family.” [End Video Message]

*Yes, I killed a man; and during this interview, I am an inmate in a state prison located in Central Ohio; and if you took the time to watch the video of my confession, you know what I did. But a bigger question is, "Why?" Why did I attempt to drive home...what led to my action that night to*

*get into my truck and risk my life and the lives of others? You will learn the answers to those questions, and a lot more, as you move through this program.*

*You know, people die on the highway for a lot of different reasons. Some because they make a mistake, while others die because someone else did. But either way...somebody is dead. Let's try to keep that from being you.*

*And in order to do that, I'm going to suggest that you pay close attention to the information being taught in this course. There may be one example, or one phrase, or one thought that you experience that will keep you from making a single, simple, mistake; a mistake that could cost you or someone else their life.*

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Wouldn't it be great if we could listen to the experiences of others and learn from those experiences; actually learn from them to the point where we don't make the same or similar mistake.

As I'm sure you have learned, science has shown that the human brain doesn't fully develop until we are well into our 20's; and the part of the brain that remains undeveloped is that part that evaluates risk. In other words, while in our teens and the first several years of our 20's, our ability to make proper choices is undermined, is actually weakened, by the simple fact that our level of maturity isn't fully developed. So keep that in mind as we progress through this lesson series and attempt to bring to your attention the importance of decision making.

Before we move deeper into the material to be covered, I want to give you an overview of this program. There are nine teaching modules to this course, each focusing on either the different decisions that drivers make or the thought processes that influence those decisions. Each lesson will end with an exam. After completing a lesson, before you proceed to the next, make sure you correctly answer each of the questions in that lesson.

If you miss a question or find the material confusing, please take a few minutes and return to the text to review the part giving you difficulty. If that fails, ask others familiar with the concepts being presented to help you. As a final resort, you may contact The Sandy Johnson Foundation through our website; we will do our best to respond to your question as quickly as possible.

Since this program is not “game-based,” repetition is used in order to embed this material into your subconscious. So when you encounter a phrase over and over again, that simply means the information is important and needs to be remembered. Skipping over repetitive words or phrases is not recommended as that is part of the learning process.

In addition, this material is designed to promote thought as well as critical thinking. Keep that in mind as you read the questions at the end of each chapter, as they are not necessarily answered specifically within that chapter.

After completing all the segments in this learning series, there will be a final exam. When that exam is completed,

you may receive immediate feedback on your test results by consulting the final pages of this workbook.

If any questions were missed, you are encouraged to go back and review the material in order to help you understand the question and its answer.

One more thing before we move on to the exam for this lesson. Throughout this text, you will be introduced to some terms and definitions that may be new to you. Expect to learn and understand the meaning of those terms...because they just might be on the tests. And yes, it's a good idea to take notes or underscore information you feel may be important.

This first lesson will be one of the easiest parts to this series so don't be disappointed that you haven't learned very much to this point; there is a lot more ahead. There are only a few questions for this segment so it should be pretty easy.

Good luck.

*Notes:*

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## LESSON 1 EXAM

1. Who was responsible for the crash that killed Sandy and her mother?

- a.) Sandy was solely responsible for the crash.
- b.) Clearly, the driver of the vehicle that struck Sandy's car was at fault.
- c.) The driver that yielded to Sandy—he was at fault because he could have prevented the crash.
- d.) All were equally at fault.
- e.) Sandy caused the crash, but everyone contributed to it.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. This learning module was important because it taught me that:

- a.) Everyone makes mistakes.
- b.) Not everyone pays attention when they drive.
- c.) All drivers should pay attention to what is going on around them.
- d.) Never drink and drive, no matter how good of a driver you think you might be.
- e.) All of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Matt made a poor decision that ended up causing someone's death. When comparing Sandy's crash to Matt's decision to drive home, what was the underlying cause of Matt's crash?

- a.) Driving drunk.
- b.) Driver Conditioning.
- c.) Having no concern for the safety of others.
- d.) Not thinking.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 2

## DON'T GIVE IT ANOTHER THOUGHT!

## PART 1

The first thing we are going to review is in this lesson is the underlying cause of nearly all vehicular crashes, **Driver Conditioning**. You heard this term earlier in the program, but what exactly is Driver Conditioning? Driver Conditioning is defined as *the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance*.

I know that can be a little hard to comprehend all at once so I'm going to repeat that one more time. But before I do, let me give you a hint, this is going to be a question on the final exam and will not be presented in the form of multiple choice, or true – false. Now, Driver Conditioning is *the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance*.

You and I become conditioned to things all the time. To illustrate that point, let's consider something that is common to all of us: a flight of stairs. We all know what stairs are. They are pretty convenient things, allowing us to move from one level to another. But have you ever considered what takes place as you approach a flight of stairs for the first

time, or considered how walking up or down a flight of stairs could be compared to driving?

Let's review.

Typically, the first thing we observe when approaching a flight of stairs for the first time is the location of the first step. We do that in order to determine where to place our foot before ascending or descending. The second, third, and fourth things we attempt to discover through our visual observation are the height of the riser, the depth of the tread, and the distance we must travel to reach the top or the bottom of the stairs. We register all this information in an instant—mostly subconsciously. This would be considered the stimulus to our behavior.



The conditioning process begins with our first two steps onto the stairs. If we place our foot on the step without having a negative experience, what we observed visually (the stairs in this case) is “reinforced.” (Reinforcement happens when the consequence of our behavior is desired or beneficial; or, to put it another way, when the consequence of our action is anything but negative.) Our second step confirms what was learned with our first step and reinforces the manner in which we are stepping. With that, the conditioning process is complete. In other words, the act of taking our first two steps onto the stairs becomes the conditioning process that directs our coming actions—how high we lift our leg, at what angle we place our foot, and so on.

Once that is learned, we will remain conditioned to that visual stimulus (the stairs). And as long as all things remain as they should—the risers are all the same height and the treads are the same depth—we will behave as we learned. Thus, our mind can pay little attention to the stairs as we ascend or descend, and we can focus instead on countless other things.

Taking all this into consideration, if we were to ascend or descend a flight of stairs with our mind focused on other matters, what would happen if one of the risers in the middle of the stairs was one inch higher than the rest? I’m sure you guessed it: An unsuspecting person going up the stairs would likely trip, while a person going down the stairs would likely fall if they were not holding on to a handrail.

Keeping with this same example, what would happen if a sign was placed on a post near the middle of the stairs warning people of the higher riser? Would people still trip or fall? The answer to this question is, “Most likely, yes!” because, once we have been conditioned to behave in a certain way, we hold on to what we have learned, and we will continue to act in that way until we are either punished for our behavior (stumble or fall in this case), or until something grabs our attention and brings our focus back to the stairs and our surroundings.

So how does this relate to driving and highway safety? Just like we stop paying attention once we become familiar with a flight of stairs, we also have a tendency to stop focusing on our driving and driving environment once we become familiar with traffic patterns and road conditions.

Fortunately, the construction of stairs is regulated by building codes, so being confronted by a step in a flight of stairs that is one inch higher than the others is unlikely. On the other hand, our network of highways is a lot more complex. Through a system of roadways, single-lane dirt roads can ultimately lead to multilane thoroughfares that continue on to obscure alleyways. Certainly, with so many transitions taking place, it is little wonder that motorists sometimes make mistakes. And if that mistake leads to a crash, if a vehicle is traveling at high speeds, the result, as you know, can be a life-changing injury or death.

To conclude this thought, when comparing stairs to highways, there is one important thing they have in common:

People failing to safely ascend or descend a flight of stairs when one step is one inch higher than the others, and drivers making a mistake when traffic patterns and road conditions unexpectedly change, are typically influenced by the same human learning process: *conditioning*.

To ingrain this point more deeply into your mind, we will review some real crashes where lives were unnecessarily lost. But before we begin, let's take a moment for a quick review of Driver Conditioning. First, the definition. Driver Conditioning is "*The process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance.*"

Once a driver becomes accustomed to consistent traffic patterns or road conditions, the attention of the driver will typically shift away from the act of driving and on to other things. Once attention has shifted away, the probability of making a mistake, when confronted with subtle changes in either traffic patterns or road conditions, increases exponentially.

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The first two examples we are going to review took place as a result of a change in traffic pattern. This first crash could have taken place in hundreds-of-thousands of similar locations across the country. Three lives were lost in this collision, all because the driver of a truck became comfortable in his driving environment and intentionally took his eyes off the road – for just a moment. The reason he stopped looking for that brief moment is known, but it is not

important here. You see, he could have been moving something on the seat of his truck, answering his phone, texting, looking to see where he would take the next bite of his sandwich—but it doesn't matter why he stopped watching the road...the point is, he briefly stopped looking where he was going—a simple, short-in-duration, mistake that just happened to take place at the wrong time. The consequence of that mistake was a crash. The results of that crash were the deaths of two teenage girls and their grandmother who were pulling out of a shopping center parking lot, on a green light, after a day of shopping for clothes for the coming school year.

How many times have you been in a vehicle when the driver pulled into an intersection after the light turned green? Happens all the time doesn't it? That is the natural thing to do—when you have a green light you pull into the intersection. Typically, no crash results from that action, and because of that we become conditioned to comfortably perform this same act over and over again, without even considering the possibility that someone might run a red light. How many times, do you suppose, could you or your friends continue to do that, without suffering negative consequences? Let me offer a simple word of caution; in the future, whether you or someone else is driving, before entering an intersection on a green light, make sure approaching traffic is stopped or stopping before you pull out. In the case we just discussed, that simple cautionary act could have saved three lives.



RECHITAN SORIN - FOTOLIA.COM

This is not the vehicle involved in that crash but it looked very similar. Clearly, no one could survive a collision this severe.

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In our second example, two commercial bus drivers were alternating shifts as they drove a group of college baseball players to the location of their spring training in Florida. The trip originated in Ohio, and it was necessary to drive all night. Just north of Atlanta, Georgia, a fresh driver got behind the wheel shortly after 5:00 in the morning. It didn't take long for him to become *conditioned* to his surroundings; after all, he had driven hundreds of thousands of miles before and was more experienced than most drivers on the road.

Before dawn, the driver entered the city as he followed a specific lane that was designated for use by high-occupancy vehicles. This particular lane was distinguishable from the others because of a diamond-shaped design painted in the



center of the lane. Since the driver was not challenged by other traffic, we can assume that he stopped focusing his attention on his driving environment and began to simply follow the diamond shaped design. Signs were posted along the highway indicating the approach of an exit ramp but the driver, with his thoughts being occupied by conversation more than the highway, failed to see them.

The exit the bus was approaching was shaped like a capital “T” requiring the driver to turn left or right at the top of a slight incline. But since the driver failed to notice he was on an exit ramp, the bus was traveling too fast to negotiate the turn. The consequence of the driver not noticing the subtle change in traffic pattern was a crash. What was the result of that crash? A total of seven people were killed that morning; five students, the bus driver, and his wife.



Associated Press/Gene Blythe

Fortunately, there was little traffic that morning and no one was under, or approaching, the final resting place of the bus, or the death toll could have been much higher.

Our final example involves changing road conditions, which can be just as dangerous as changes in traffic patterns when they go unnoticed.



<http://hurricanetrack.com/jpegs/us17flood.jpg>

In this example, an engineering mistake resulted in a water drainage problem on a newly constructed section of highway in Orange County, California. But what made this particular location so dangerous is that it was a major highway and vehicles were traveling at high speeds. Perhaps even more importantly, this highway remained uncorrected for over seven years.

During that time, countless motorists who had been driving safely for dozens of miles on wet roads suddenly lost control

of their vehicles, hydroplaning when they drove over the poorly drained highway.

Many of the crashes that took place could have been avoided if drivers were paying closer attention to their driving environment, visibly observing the changes of the road surface—the pooling of water—and adjusting their speed to compensate for the loss of traction.

But, that didn't happen. The reason it didn't happen is because, as drivers become conditioned to their driving environment they stop paying close attention to that environment. This happens to all drivers, and it will happen to you.

As we progress through this training you are going to be introduced to other problems that are caused by the effects of Driver Conditioning. But for now, let's conclude this lesson and take a short exam.

*Notes:*

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## LESSON 2 EXAM

1. The definition of Driver Conditioning is: the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that remain consistent over an undefined period of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The underlying reason Sandy and her mother were killed is:

- a.) She stopped paying attention.
- b.) The other driver yielded to her
- c.) She and her mother were engaged in conversation.
- d.) Sandy became conditioned to her driving environment.
- e.) Both A and B are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When we become comfortable in our environment, we:

- a.) Stop paying attention.
- b.) Focus on other things besides driving.
- c.) Miss seeing things right in front of us.
- d.) All of the above.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The behavior of people is most often influenced by:

- a.) Not wanting to conform.
- b.) Conditioning.
- c.) Not paying attention.
- d.) A and C are correct.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. In the first example of a crash influenced by a traffic pattern change, when the two teenage girls and their grandmother were killed, in addition to the mistake made by the truck driver, who else could have prevented the crash?

- a.) The granddaughters—by watching traffic and warning their grandmother.
- b.) Highway officials—could have had additional traffic controls in place.
- c.) The grandmother.
- d.) All of the above.
- e.) No one else—the truck driver’s lack of attention caused the crash.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. When it comes to Driver Conditioning:

- a.) Most drivers are unaware it affects them.
- b.) It is something that can be prevented.
- c.) It is only dangerous at night.
- d.) Driver’s should not worry about it.
- e.) As long as you are aware of it, you will not be affected by it.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Driver Conditioning is the same as distracted driving.

True: \_\_\_\_\_

False: \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 3

## DON'T GIVE IT ANOTHER THOUGHT!

## PART 2

As you can see by the previous lessons, the things that impact highway safety the most are “drivers;” you and me. And as scary as THAT is, it gets even worse.

As we begin most sections, we will briefly touch on some of the high points of the previous lessons. So, to prepare for this lesson, let's peek back at the earlier sessions for a brief review.

In those sections, we learned that Driver Conditioning is the underlying cause of nearly all vehicular crashes and that the definition of Driver Conditioning is *“The process through which driver's become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance.”*

You will recall that once we become conditioned to our driving environment, we stop paying attention. And once we stop paying attention, we are more likely to make a mistake when confronted with subtle changes in traffic pattern or road conditions.

In this section, we are going to take a closer look at what happens with our thought processes after we become conditioned to our environment.

Ready? Let's begin.

Once the process of Driver Conditioning is complete and begins to influence our driving behavior, our level of concentration, or focus, is reduced, and one of two mental processes takes over. The first we will discuss is **Mental Compromise**. *Mental Compromise takes place when we mentally share our driving experience with thought, conversation, or physical activities not associated with driving.*

Mental Compromise can be broken down into two subcategories: Intentional and Unintentional. **Intentional Mental Compromise** *takes place when we purposely focus our attention away from driving and place it on something else.* Whether it is simply a thought, conversation with others, or physical activity such as adjusting an electronic device, answering or making a phone call, texting, etc., Intentional Mental Compromise is a self-initiated event.

Equally as dangerous as Intentional Mental Compromise is **Unintentional Mental Compromise**. *This takes place when our level of concentration is reduced, but not initiated on purpose.* In other words, our mind just wanders. This happens frequently when driving – our mind simply wanders and begins to consider events, persons, or situations that influence or, in some way, touch our life.

In addition to thought, we can also initiate activities without thinking about them. For example, mechanically reaching for our phone when someone calls, or routinely looking at a passenger when engaged in conversation; all of these things work to make our driving environment less safe—and we do them completely without thought.

To summarize, *both Intentional and Unintentional Mental Compromise create periods of time when our primary attention, our mental focus, is on a thought, conversation, or activities other than driving.*

The second mental state we can fall into, once Driver Conditioning is complete, is **Cognitive Disengagement**. This mental condition is probably the most frightening of all. When under the influence of Cognitive Disengagement, we become mentally out of touch with our surroundings or purpose. We will define Cognitive Disengagement for our purposes as *that period of time when we are without thought or awareness*. In other words, our consciousness, our thought processes, quite literally, shut down.

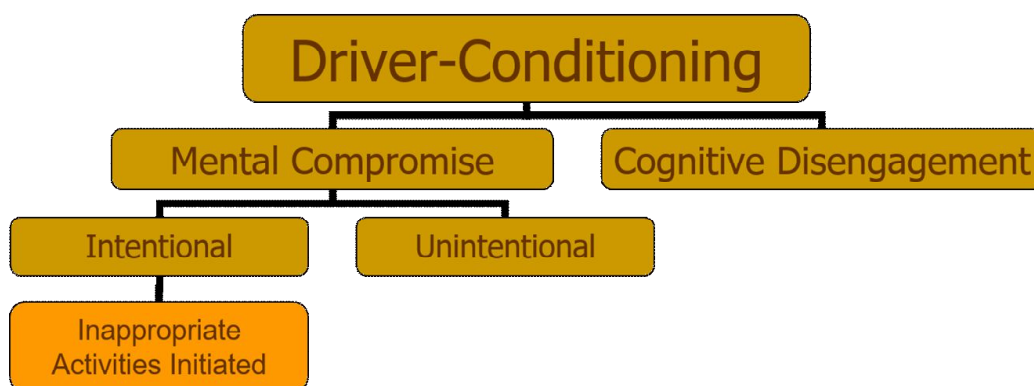
When being influenced by Cognitive Disengagement, we don't even know it is occurring; it is only recognized "after the fact," when we come to the sudden realization that we don't remember traveling the last several miles or minutes. This mental state can be so intense, that after "waking up" so-to-speak, it may take a few moments to figure out where we are, or to even remember where we are going.



During interviews, it was learned that even motorcyclists experience Cognitive Disengagement. Imagine riding a motor-cycle and suddenly realizing that you don't remember traveling the last several miles...talk about dangerous. So remember, when traveling, no one is immune from this hazardous mental state.

Fortunately, Cognitive Disengagement occurs infrequently, but it can occur when traveling long distances, during quiet periods, or simply driving in areas that are familiar to us. So although it may occur infrequently, it can happen under a broad range of circumstances.

If we were to view an organizational chart to illustrate what has been presented thus far, it would look like the diagram below. As you can see, Driver Conditioning leads to Cognitive Disengagement and Mental Compromise. Mental Compromise is further broken down into both Unintentional and Intentional, and it is under Intentional Mental Compromise that distracted driving is deliberately initiated by drivers.



According to a recent study conducted by the AAA Foundation, 58% of all teen crashes are a result of distracted driving; so clearly, Intentional Mental Compromise is extremely dangerous.

Now, before we go on, we should probably clear up some potential confusion. You may have heard or used the phrase “Highway Hypnosis,” and when we presented cognitive disengagement, it might seem like that’s what we’re talking about here. So to help eliminate confusion that may take place between Cognitive Disengagement and Highway Hypnosis, let’s briefly review the differences.

*Fatigue is the primary cause of Highway Hypnosis*, coupled with a lack of challenge in our driving environment. And although a lack of challenge in our driving environment does contribute to Cognitive Disengagement, it is mostly caused by a strong familiarity with the area in which we are traveling. That is why Cognitive Disengagement can occur most anytime we are driving in areas either familiar to us or in areas that present an unchallenging driving environment.

Unfortunately, neither Cognitive Disengagement nor Highway Hypnosis can be prevented. But the probability of their occurrence can be diminished. From the driver’s perspective, working to remain mentally alert and, when able, being physically or mentally active will help drivers maintain their focus on traveling.

Before we continue, let’s have a short review. All drivers experience driver conditioning, and when Driver Condi-

tioning takes effect, a driver's ability to remain focused on their driving environment is diminished. During this time, Mental Compromise will usually set in, and a motorist will either intentional or unintentionally share their driving experience with other activities, conversation, or thought.

It is difficult for science to measure how much of our focus on driving is diminished by these distractions because we are all different and the depth of our concentration on activity or thought can range from practically zero to *total* concentration.

We also learned about Cognitive Disengagement and how it is different from Highway Hypnosis. But while we are on this subject, do you wonder why we don't get into more crashes when we are experiencing Cognitive Disengagement—when we are not aware of our surroundings? As we continue into this segment, let's take a quick look at the answer to that question.

Have you ever done something without remembering that you did it? Maybe brushing your teeth before going to bed; taking a medication; or some other activity that is a normal routine for you...have you ever thought to yourself, "did I do that, or not?" Sometimes we can try really hard to remember, but we just can't.

Well, the reason we are able to do things without remembering them—the reason we are able to drive and not remember doing so—is because of something called “**Automaticity**.” Simply put, Automaticity gives us the ability to

perform an act without thought, or, in some cases, even remembering that we did it. A simple definition of Automaticity is *the processing of information in a way that is automatic and involuntary, occurring without conscious control.*

Now, focus on the words “automatic and involuntary, occurring without conscious control.” That is how we can drive and literally not have any idea we are doing so, or even remember doing it.

But that doesn’t completely answer our question. How can we drive while experiencing Cognitive Disengagement without crashing our vehicle? Any idea? The answer is...our eyes are open! It is that simple and that complicated. Because our eyes are open and our mind is functioning, we are able to perform a life-threatening task without even being aware of it.

Who experiences this naturally occurring event? Everyone! At some point, assuming we live long enough, everyone who operates a motor vehicle will experience a period of Cognitive Disengagement at some time while driving.

Here is a true example of how one driver was influenced by Cognitive Disengagement. A nurse friend of mine told me that one morning around 7:30, after her 12-hour shift, she left work. She remembers walking to her car, unlocking the door, getting into her vehicle, placing the key in the ignition, starting the car, and backing out of her parking spot. The

next thing she remembers is sitting in her driveway watching her garage door go up.

In this experience of Cognitive Disengagement, she drove on city streets during morning rush-hour traffic for nearly 15 minutes, pulled into her driveway, and pushed the remote control for her garage door—all without remembering a thing! In this case, although her driving experience was being challenged with stop-and-go traffic, lane changes, and turns, she was driving in an area completely familiar to her. That familiarity enabled her mind to completely shut down, except for visual recognition and response mechanisms, and allowed her to drive home automatically.

Okay, we have covered Intentional Mental Compromise, which takes place when we make a conscious decision to distract ourselves from the act of driving. We have covered Unintentional Mental Compromise, when our mind simply takes over and engages in thought or causes us to initiate activities not involved with driving. We have also learned about Cognitive Disengagement, when our thought processes simply shut down and we are not aware of our actions and are not engaged in thought. And we have also discussed Automaticity, which keeps us from crashing our car when our mind is not focused on driving.

I think that is probably enough for this session; so, let's end this lesson here and take a quick exam.

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[illegible]

### LESSON 3 EXAM

1. Mental Compromise has two sub-categories. They are:

- a.) Right or wrong.
- b.) Left or right.
- c.) With thought or without thought.
- d.) Intentional or Unintentional.
- e.) Both A and C are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Mental Compromise:

- a.) Is completely controllable.
- b.) Happens only at night.
- c.) Can be prevented if we get plenty of rest.
- d.) Is unavoidable.
- e.) Both B and C are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Cognitive Disengagement occurs:

- a.) Only when we are tired.
- b.) During long drives.
- c.) During short drives.
- d.) Both B and C are correct.
- e.) Only at night.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The best way to avoid Cognitive Disengagement is to:

- a.) Listen to music.
- b.) Stop every two to three hours to stretch your legs.
- c.) Avoid long trips alone.
- d.) All of the above.
- e.) Cognitive Disengagement is infrequent but unpreventable.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Cognitive Disengagement and Highway Hypnosis are:

- a.) The underlying cause of Driver Conditioning.
- b.) The same thing.
- c.) Completely controllable.
- d.) Dangerous mental states.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What activities are examples of Automaticity?

- a.) Brushing your teeth every morning.
- b.) Driving in familiar territory and not remembering the trip.
- c.) Driving in unfamiliar territory late at night.
- d.) A & B.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

7. When remembering the Driver Conditioning organizational chart, from what did “distracted driving” result?

- a.) Cognitive Disengagement.
- b.) Unintentional Mental Compromise.
- c.) Driver Conditioning.
- d.) Intentional Mental Compromise.
- e.) Mental Compromise.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



## LESSON 4

# “THE VALUE OF TIME”

In this lesson, we’re going to discuss the importance of time. But before we begin let’s have a quick review of the material covered in lesson three. If you recall, we expanded on the topic of Driver Conditioning by identifying what happens to drivers, mentally, once Driver Conditioning has taken place. Specifically, we talked about Cognitive Disengagement, and both Intentional, and Unintentional, Mental Compromise.

Then, just before completing Lesson Three, we discussed the reason why we don’t get into a crash when experiencing Cognitive Disengagement—sound familiar? To refresh your memory, it is Automaticity that enables us to function when we are completely detached from any awareness of our surroundings; and the fact that our eyes are open is what keeps us from crashing.

As we continue, let me see if I can answer an unasked question: You may be thinking, “I’ve learned about Driver Conditioning, Mental Compromise, Cognitive Disengagement, and Automaticity but, so what? If my eyes are open and I’m not going to crash anyway, why is this stuff even important?”

If that question is actually on your mind, or if you're simply curious about the answer, here it is: when it comes to the amount of time that most drivers are focused 100% on their driving environment, it is believed to be below 10%. In other words, most of the time a vehicle is traveling on a highway, the driver of that vehicle is mentally disengaged, at least in part, from the act of driving. Do you really want to be on the road with people that aren't paying attention to what they are doing? Perhaps a bigger question, do they really want to be on the road with you?

Let's look deeper into this problem...this "lack of focus."

We have all been told not to text and drive. We've been warned that doing so often results in a driver's attention being taken from the road for five seconds, or longer. We have even been told that a vehicle can travel the length of a football field, or more, in that period of time. Clearly, taking your eyes off the road for that long has proven to be deadly too many times. But, what about the little stuff? What about taking your eyes off the road for a second, or a half-second...do you think that is okay?

Think about driving down the street where you live, or a friend lives; a neighborhood street with cars parked along the sides of the road. You are in a hurry but you know you shouldn't speed so you hold back and only drive 26, maybe 27 miles per hour. You are thinking about the fact you are late and you are not focused on your surroundings when a child runs out between two parked cars about 20 feet in front of you. The child makes it to the middle of the road but,

because you aren't paying attention, your reaction time is delayed by one-half of a second. In that one-half of a second, your car has already traveled that 20 feet and you have hit that child without even taking your foot off the gas.

Most vehicular crashes occur quickly. Our response time is critical if we are to avoid the consequences of a crash when an immediate response is needed. I will share a true story about a near-crash that could have been fatal if one of the drivers involved in this near tragedy had not been paying attention.

While driving on a freeway the driver of a passenger car, we'll call him Ben, noticed a man standing in the road trying to put a file cabinet back onto the trailer from which it had fallen. The man, his car and trailer, were about 350 yards ahead and were located in the lane to Ben's immediate right. Also in that lane, and next to Ben, was a full-size tractor-trailer. The truck driver did not appear to be reacting to the stopped vehicle so Ben believed the trucker had not yet spotted the man stopped on the road. (You see, this is one of the major problems of Mental Compromise and Cognitive Disengagement—we don't recognize hazards quickly enough to avoid them.) Because of this potentially grave situation, Ben had to think and act immediately.

Ben was about half way through the process of passing the truck and traveling at about 60 mph; the truck appeared to be traveling about 55 mph. At that speed, the truck would not be able to stop in time. The only way to avoid a collision was for the trucker to maneuver his vehicle into another lane—

and he had to do so quickly. The truck was about 4 seconds away from impact.

Recognizing the danger, Ben looked in his rearview mirror and realized another car was immediately behind him, so slamming on his brakes to allow the truck driver to pull into his lane was out of the question. He couldn't pull to his left because the shoulder was too narrow and he would hit a concrete divider. Looking to his right and under the truck, he could see other traffic which would prevent the truck driver from pulling into that lane. That left him only one choice. Now keep in mind; Ben had to respond immediately to provide an escape route for the truck driver. In order for him to respond that quickly, he had to recognize the danger, evaluate the problem, and act, almost simultaneously.

In order to avoid a most certain collision, Ben slammed his foot down on the gas pedal. Fortunately, he was driving a car with enough power to enable him to get ahead of the truck just as the truck was reaching the stopped vehicle. While pulling into the lane to his left, behind Ben, the truck driver missed both vehicles by inches.

Now, in this case, a one-half second delay in Ben's reaction time would have been deadly. A half-second delay when needing to stop in a neighborhood can be deadly. A half second delay in any reaction to a potential hazard can be deadly.

When you get into a vehicle, and make a conscious decision to focus your attention on anything other than driving—

whether it is your friends, your cell phone, whatever—when you focus your attention on anything other than driving, YOU are a hazard to all other motorists and pedestrians. YOU are potentially deadly! YOU can kill, or be killed.

We'll close this lesson now. If you have a chance and have access to YouTube, watch Part 1, Shattered Dreams, of the video at the address below. Performed by students in the SADD Chapter of Royal Palm Beach High School and volunteer first responders, this video shows what can happen in an instant.

Link to Video: [http://youtu.be/FT\\_ZU75sG00](http://youtu.be/FT_ZU75sG00)

Does a half-second matter? Yes!

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## LESSON 4 EXAM

### “THE VALUE OF TIME”

1. – When it comes to time, taking my eyes off the road for just a moment has never been a problem; I’ve never experienced a crash or even come close to a crash. So what’s the big deal?

- a.) It’s not a big deal; don’t worry about it!
- b.) My friends, even my parents, take their eyes off the road and they’ve never experienced a problem—neither will I!
- c.) Any period of time I’m not watching where I’m going can result in a crash.
- d.) Not looking at someone you are talking to is ‘rude,’ so looking at them for a tenth of a second is simply being polite and won’t hurt a thing.
- e.) I can multi-task so looking at something else is not a problem as long as I can see the road in my peripheral vision.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Traveling at 26 miles per hour, in one second, a vehicle can travel approximately:

- a.) Forty feet.
- b.) Twenty-seven feet.
- c.) Ninety feet.
- d.) The length of a football field.
- e.) It is difficult to determine how far it will travel.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When traveling under normal conditions, the amount of time most drivers are focused primarily on their driving environment is believed to be:

- a.) Almost all of the time;
- b.) Less than 10%;
- c.) Over 25%;
- d.) Unknown;
- e.) Between 30 and 60 percent.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 5

## DRIVE TO ARRIVE

There is a slogan: *Drive to Arrive!* That may be a catchy phrase but it's really more than that. After all, isn't that what all of us really want? Isn't that what we want our family and friends to do? We want all of us to arrive safely at our destinations. Unfortunately, there are a lot of circumstances that may keep that from happening.

As we've learned so far, Driver Conditioning is the underlying cause of nearly all vehicular crashes and, once Driver Conditioning takes place, all kinds of problems develop. Mental Compromise is the most common, both Intentional and Unintentional. That's when we share our driving experience with other activities, conversation, or thought. Cognitive Disengagement is another problem; that period of time when we have no thought about what we are doing, and no memory of having done it.

All of these mental states are unavoidable and affect every driver on the road. In this lesson, we're going to discuss another kind of conditioning.

When it comes to the study of psychology, conditioning takes place only when influenced by outside stimuli. In other words, there is no such thing as "self" conditioning. But let's use our imagination and see if we can find a creative way to



apply this general concept of “self-conditioning” to our own driving.

Here is what I propose: You and I can “condition” ourselves! We can teach ourselves how to behave—we can teach ourselves to perform both positive and negative behavior, automatically, when confronted with certain situations.

Let’s get started.

We all know there are two types of decisions; right and wrong. And usually, we can tell the difference between a right and wrong decision by the consequence we experience. For example, anyone who has touched a hot stove when they were young has likely never done it again (at least not on purpose). Why? Because when they touched the stove and were burned, they learned pretty quickly that the consequence to that behavior was unfavorable.

So it is with countless other actions—we perform an act, receive immediate feedback, and either continue the activity or discontinue it depending upon the outcome: the consequence of that act.

Based on this, we could logically say the definition of a **wrong decision** is “*any decision that results in a negative consequence.*” Conversely, the definition then of a **right decision** could be “*any decision that results in a positive consequence.*”

Although this seems simple enough, it does create a dilemma—how do we know for sure if a particular decision

is right or wrong if there is neither a positive nor negative consequence? What happens when we initiate an action and the consequence to that action is neutral?

The answer to this question is the basis for this lesson. Because if we perform a specific act and there are no negative consequences afterward, that act is registered in our mind as being positive. I'm going to repeat that: *If we perform a specific act and there are no negative consequences afterward, that act is registered in our mind as being positive.*

Let's look at a couple activities that we know are wrong, and see if we can make them appear to be right. We'll begin with a discussion of seatbelt use. We are taught to use our seatbelt when traveling in a vehicle. But when we are alone, and not under the control or influence of another person, we have a personal and private decision to make: do we wear our seat belt, or do we not wear our seatbelt? Obviously, one decision is right, and one is wrong. Since we have been taught to wear a seatbelt, in order to change that behavior, thought will have to occur, and with thought, the evaluation of consequences comes into the picture.

If we chose to continue to buckle-up after weighing the consequences, we begin to perform that act each time we get into a vehicle, and it can become an "automatic behavior." In other words, *Automaticity* can take over and we will buckle-up whether we think about it or not.

In short, we “program” ourselves; we “teach/train” ourselves; we “*condition*” ourselves to respond to particular stimuli—the act of sitting in a car. That act, as simplistic as it is, can automatically initiate the action of buckling our seatbelt if the habit of buckling up has been created; and under normal circumstances, we will automatically repeat that act until we change our decision

But, on the other hand, if we chose *not* to buckle-up, and there are no negative consequences that follow, our wrong choice is reinforced and our mind interprets that action as a “positive.” Through repetition, the act of not buckling our seatbelt can become a *habit*.

What happens when we repeat a bad habit too many times? Sooner or later, the negative consequences we were warned about can occur, and the outcome can be deadly.

Let’s discuss texting.

We are taught not to read or send a text while driving. But when we are alone, and not under the influence or control of another person, we have a personal and private decision to make: do we text, or do we not text? Obviously, one decision is right, and one is wrong. Since we have been taught not to text, in order to change that behavior, thought will have to occur; and with thought, the evaluation of consequences comes into the picture.

If we chose to continue to not read or send a text after weighing the consequences, we will begin to avoid that act each time we get into a vehicle, and that avoidance can

become an “automatic behavior.” Which means, as you know, Automaticity can take over and we will avoid reading or sending text messages while driving, whether we think about it or not. In essence, the act of avoiding incoming or outgoing text messages can become a habit and be performed without giving it any thought.

As before, that means we have “programmed” ourselves; we have “taught/trained” ourselves; we have “*conditioned*” ourselves to NOT perform those specific acts each time we get behind the wheel of a vehicle. As stated earlier, as simplistic as the act of getting into the driver’s seat is, that act can automatically initiate the action of putting down our electronic device with the intent of not picking it up under any circumstances while driving. Performing that intentional act often enough will lead to the formation of a habit, and under normal circumstances, we will automatically continue to avoid those actions until we intentionally change our decision.

On the other hand, if we chose to send or receive a text, and there are no negative consequences that follow, our wrong choice is reinforced, and our mind interprets that action as a “positive.” Through repetition, the act of sending and receiving text messages can become a *habit* and be performed without giving it any thought whatsoever.

What happens when we repeat a bad habit too many times? Like before, sooner or later, the negative consequences we were warned about can occur and the outcome can be life changing.

What is the point to all of this? Let me briefly summarize this portion of the lesson. We are taught the difference between right behavior and wrong behavior all of our lives. And we will typically perform just as we have been told in order to avoid the negative consequences of being reprimanded by those in authority over us.

But as we age, there are times when that authority is not around, and when the authority is absent, we then have the freedom to make our own choice. That is what living is comprised of, a series of choices. What this lesson is attempting to teach you is this: you will ultimately have complete control over the decisions you make; and throughout your life, like everyone else, you will sometimes make good choices, and sometimes you will make bad choices.

If you make bad choices and continue to do that over time, the probability of suffering the negative consequences of that choice becomes more likely.

But there is a second lesson we want you to get that goes beyond the subject of you making a mistake, and that is the consequences that await you when others make a mistake. Even if you make all the right decisions in life, there are no guarantees you will avoid the consequences of the mistakes, the poor decisions, of others.

Now, let's take a moment to review some other bad habits that drivers can develop over time in the hopes that you will decide NOT to develop them. Besides texting and not

fastening our seatbelt, a few of the more common bad habits that drivers develop are excessive speeding; changing lanes without signaling; eating while driving; personal grooming; and driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Over time, any or all of these negative behaviors can become a habit if we engage in that behavior without experiencing negative consequences.

If you recall from Matt's comments at the beginning of this course, it is driving while under the influence of alcohol that led to another man's death and Matt's imprisonment. And just to be clear, Matt followed the same path that was just laid out for you. He knew it was unsafe to drink and drive but when left to decide for himself, to make his own decision, he chose to act against what he was taught and decided to drive under the influence of alcohol. Once that decision was made and acted on, it didn't take long to learn that, at least for him, he could not only drink and drive, but he could do so safely. How did he know he could do that? Because the first time he tried it, everything turned out okay. The same with the second time he tried it, and the third and the fourth....

What happens when we continue a behavior that we know to be wrong, over and over again, without experiencing negative consequences? Well, sooner or later the laws of probability will surface and the negative consequences we were told about can occur.

I encourage you *not* to initiate a process that goes against what you have been taught, as Matt did. Remember in our first lesson you heard the statement that people die for a lot of different reasons. Some because they made a mistake, while others die because someone else did. Remember, either way... someone is dead.

*Notes:*

[illegible]

## LESSON 5 EXAM

1. When it comes to making decisions, it is easy to determine if the decision is right or wrong simply by experiencing the consequences of that decision.

True \_\_\_\_\_

False \_\_\_\_\_

2. When we are alone, we have the ability to choose to do anything we want to do.

True: \_\_\_\_\_

False: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Neutral experiences are always the result of right choices.

True \_\_\_\_\_

False \_\_\_\_\_

4. Repetition of an action can lead to it becoming a:

a.) Habit.

b.) Guaranteed response.

c.) Safe choice.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. It is hard to develop a bad habit because we have been taught what's right and wrong.

True \_\_\_\_\_

False \_\_\_\_\_

6. If I ALWAYS make the right choice when driving, it is probable that I will never be involved in a wreck.

True: \_\_\_\_\_

False: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The only way to avoid ever being in a crash is to never get into a car.

True: \_\_\_\_\_

False: \_\_\_\_\_



## LESSON 6

**“WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?”**

During the introduction of this program, you were introduced to Matt Cordle, as well as the circumstances leading up to his imprisonment. If you were able to view the video, *“I Killed a Man,”* Matt gave a list of some of the excuses people use to “validate” their decision for driving drunk.

In this lesson, we’re going to take a closer look at two things. First, we will identify some of the thought processes and excuses people give for making bad choices. Secondly, we will expose the mental shortcomings of those who ultimately make a poor decision.

When it comes to the more dangerous things, like not buckling up and driving while texting or while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, why do teens and adults do it in the first place? Let’s look at some of the answers to that question and see if any are worth the loss of someone’s life?

**Embarrassment:** “I don’t want people to think I can’t handle a few drinks;” or, “I don’t want my friends to think that I’m afraid to text while driving!”

**Convenience:** “My car is right here; it is much easier just to drive home, and I don’t want to have to drive back in the

morning to get it;” or, “I don’t have time to stop and besides, this text is important and it will only take a few seconds.”

**Consideration:** “I don’t want to bother anyone with having to take me home;” or, “if I don’t text my friend, they may think I’m angry with them” or “they won’t get the information they need.”

**Confidence:** “I can drive home! I’ve only had a couple of drinks;” “I can text without any problems at all.”

**Wasted/Intoxicated:** Totally incapable of making a responsible or rational decision.

The more those excuses are used, and the more an irresponsible act is performed without suffering negative results, the more likely we are to continue that behavior. After a while, the acts of driving home intoxicated, or texting, or any number of other dangerous activities are initiated without even considering the potential negative consequences of failure; after all, we’ve done it so many times before, we have become “conditioned” to perform our own poor behavior without giving it any thought.

What are some of the other reasons behind the cause of making poor decisions?

Sometimes it is due to:

**Lack of knowledge:** Driver is unfamiliar with the potential problem or danger due to lack of information or training.

**Lack of understanding:** Driver has been exposed to proper training material but does not recognize or comprehend its importance.

**Lack of respect:** Driver feels they are incapable of error and have no regard for the safety of others.

**Lack of judgment:** Driver believes they will never experience negative consequences to inappropriate behavior.

And what causes all of this to take place? Driver Conditioning—the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance. Because, once we become conditioned to our driving environment we stop paying attention to that environment—either intentionally or unintentionally. And in addition to losing focus, as we begin to make poor choices, we become emboldened to do anything we feel like doing because negative consequences aren't immediately experienced.

Some of you may be comfortable with driving right now, even though you have just started to experience highway driving. And because you are comfortable in that environment, you feel you don't need to pay attention now—to this course. If this applies to you, more than likely, you lack knowledge, understanding, respect, or judgment. Which means you are likely to use the excuses mentioned above: specifically you are more likely to use embarrassment,

convenience, consideration, or confidence as an excuse to justify making bad choices.

What happens when we perform an irresponsible act over and over again without suffering a negative consequence? It will most likely become a habit and be repeated until a negative consequence is suffered.

I hope by pointing this out to you, you will not be like the high percentage of teens that take driving for granted. I hope you will reconsider your attitude toward driving and work to become a more responsible, and therefore a safer, driver.

That brings us to the end of this lesson. But rather than have a stand-alone exam, we are going to do something different. For this lesson, there will be two distinct groups of questions. The first group consists of questions pertaining to the material being taught in this section. Like before, we would like you to not only answer the questions correctly but also understand what is being taught—the concept(s) behind the question.

The second group of questions does not have wrong answers; in other words, so long as you answer each question honestly it will be a “right” answer for you.

What we want you to see by this second group of questions, are the responses that project your attitude toward driving at this particular point in this educational series. Again, answer each question honestly. Tell yourself how serious you are about driving safely. What is your level of concern regarding safe driving? Do you care, one way or the other? Is this

material being completed just because you are being told to, or are you learning this information because you truly want to be a safer driver? Again, there are no wrong answers to Part 2, so long as you are presenting how you honestly feel.

Understanding one's *self* is important for personal growth. It helps us to better understand who we are and, potentially, what we stand for. So after responding to this second group of questions, take a moment to reflect on how your feelings or attitude at this point may influence your personal driving habits.

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LESSON 6 EXAM

Group 1

1. “I don’t want people to think I am afraid to text” is an example of:

- a.) Convenience.
- b.) Embarrassment.
- c.) Confidence.
- d.) Consideration.
- e.) Stubbornness.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. “I have to get this information to my friend and don’t have time to stop” is most likely an example of:

- a.) Confidence.
- b.) Convenience.
- c.) Embarrassment.
- d.) Consideration.
- e.) Both B and D are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. “Texting is not a problem to me because I am good at multi-tasking” is an example of:

- a.) Embarrassment.
- b.) Multi-tasking.
- c.) Confidence.
- d.) Intoxication.
- e.) Convenience.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. When a driver feels they are incapable of error and have no regard for the safety of others, it is an example of a lack of:

- a.) Consideration.
- b.) Knowledge.
- c.) Respect.
- d.) Recognition.
- e.) Understanding.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. When a driver believes they will never experience negative consequences to inappropriate behavior, they most likely lack:

- a.) Judgement.
- b.) Respect.
- c.) A smartphone.
- d.) Knowledge.
- e.) Understanding.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. When a driver is unfamiliar with a potential problem or danger due to lack of information or training, they lack:

- a.) Knowledge.
- b.) Understanding.
- c.) Respect.
- d.) Awareness of national or local news.
- e.) Judgement.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2

(No right or wrong answer – Just give an honest response.)

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

With the ability to choose, comes responsibility. How we express that responsibility through our actions is a demonstration of our character.

I agree: \_\_\_\_\_.

I disagree: \_\_\_\_\_.

A definition of the word “character” is *the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual*. Based on that definition, do you believe you possess “good” character?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_.

No: \_\_\_\_\_.

If you feel you possess good character, do you feel you have an obligation to make responsible choices when driving?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_.

No: \_\_\_\_\_.

Making responsible choices will not *guarantee* your safety. With that in mind, what impact will irresponsible choices have on your safety and the safety of others?

Positive impact: \_\_\_\_\_.

Negative impact: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Based on the material presented to this point,  
when driving:**

Are you more likely, or less likely, to text while driving?

More likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

Less likely: \_\_\_\_\_.



Are you more likely, or less likely to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

More likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

Less likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

Overall, are you more likely, or less likely, to be negatively influenced by peer pressure encouraging you to do things you know you shouldn't do?

More likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

Less likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

When you are free to make your own decision while driving, are you more likely, or less likely to modify your behavior away from the way you were taught?

More likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

Less likely: \_\_\_\_\_.

Based on probabilities, using your own judgment and realizing that most people are involved in a vehicular mishap during their lifetime, if/when it happens to you, who is most likely to be at fault?

Me: \_\_\_\_\_.

Another driver: \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Check all that apply:**

The material in this series of lessons is:

\_\_\_\_\_ A waste of my time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Helping me to understand the importance of driving safely.

\_\_\_\_\_ Helping me to understand how easy it is to make a mistake.

\_\_\_\_\_ Important, and should be taught to everyone who drives, or rides, in a motor vehicle.

## LESSON 7

## WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU GET!

At this point in our lesson series, I hope you will agree with me that driving is a serious matter. Yet, in spite of that, you will frequently see people who are driving and not paying attention to the road or their driving environment. Try not to focus on them too much, because that can easily turn into a distraction for you; and you don't want to become as dangerous as they are!

Before we get started in Lesson Seven, let's have a quick review of the previous lessons. Again, the purpose of our reviews is to help reinforce the material we have covered and embed it more deeply into your mind. We do this for the simple reason that studies have shown that much of what is learned during the driver's education period is ignored until the mid-thirties, after our brains have fully developed and when our sense of responsibility is heightened. So, we want to infuse this knowledge into your mind as deeply as we can.

Throughout the lessons to this point, we have learned quite a bit. We have identified the underlying cause of nearly all vehicular crashes—Driver Conditioning. We also learned the definition of Driver Conditioning—*the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance.*

We reviewed some examples of how subtle changes in traffic patterns and road conditions can prove to be fatal once Driver Conditioning begins to influence us.

Later, we learned that when a driver becomes conditioned to his or her driving environment, that Mental Compromise takes place—when we share our driving experience with other activities, conversation, or thought. Sometimes this is done intentionally, and sometimes not.

We also covered Cognitive Disengagement, and how it occasionally overtakes us, and we drive without conscious effort because of Automaticity.

Then, we learned about the real problems with all of these mental states—how, when we stop paying attention to our driving environment, our ability to identify and react to hazards in a timely and proper manner is dramatically reduced.

In lesson five, you were taught about decision-making and why we make poor decisions. We also explained and gave examples of how bad habits are formed—by initiating an improper action and not receiving a negative result.

Finally, in our last lesson, we reviewed excuses that people make to justify poor choices.

This brings us to Lesson Seven and the topic of “blindness.”

Sometimes what you think you see isn’t really there; and sometimes, what you don’t see, is. Far too often, a driver’s

wandering mind results in a collision due to failure to notice a traffic sign, signal, or hazard that is literally, right in front of them. The reason for this is because we only focus on a limited part of our environment at any given time. This is a result of another natural phenomenon called **Inattentional Blindness**.

*Inattentional Blindness* may be defined as “*the failure to see objects in our field of vision—even when looking at them—due to attention being focused elsewhere.*” The inability to see objects within our field of vision is the basis for some interesting videos. When you have the time, search out videos showing Inattentional Blindness on YouTube. I believe you will find them to be not only entertaining but enlightening as well.

Getting back on topic, in our field of vision we are typically overloaded with stimuli, and it is not possible to pay attention to everything all at once. Consequently, we often only see what we are looking for. Proof of that can be found everywhere. For example, in the crash that killed Sandy, she was obviously looking at the vehicle that was approaching from her right, as well as the intersection she was about to cross. Being focused on those two things, she looked past the sign that was right in front of her warning that CROSS TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP—a sign that, if seen, would have saved her life.

The same can be said for the bus driver in Atlanta. There were signs indicating that he was approaching an exit, but he just didn't see them.

Let's take a look at a couple of photos where Inattention Blindness played a significant role. Both of these crashes coincidentally involved motorcycles that were in full view of the driver of the vehicle which caused the crash, but they simply were not seen.



Philip G. Pavely / *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

In this first crash, the cyclist was not wearing a helmet. Although he did survive the crash, he underwent 17 hours of surgery to repair his face. The highest shatter-point on the windshield shows the area where his face made contact with the vehicle.

His motorcycle was, of course, destroyed in the collision. You can see its remains below.



Philip G. Pavely / *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

In this third photo, the victims were not as lucky. Both girls in the car and the motorcyclist were killed instantly.



Photobucket.com

To bring this into the parameter of our educational program, the driver of each of the automobiles had fallen victim to Driver Conditioning and stopped focusing all of their attention on the potential hazards being faced within their field of vision. Both crashes occurred during the day. In the first crash, since there was a passenger in the car, I am going to make the assumption that the driver was probably engaged in conversation at the time of, or just before, the crash. In the second crash, the driver was on her cell phone when she pulled into the intersection. Obviously, not focused on her driving environment, she looked right past the motorcycle that was heading toward them at 85 mph.

The difficulty of seeing dangers that are right in front of us is even worse at night when all we see are headlights. Under these conditions, it is easy to miss a vehicle with only one headlight when traveling in a group of other vehicles. It is also difficult to accurately estimate its distance.

There are other types of blindness as well, such as change blindness and attentional blindness, just as there are other dangers present when we drive; but I'm afraid if we covered every aspect of safe driving, none of us would ever get out of school. So the points we want you to remember most are these:

1. Don't necessarily trust what you see, and always second guess yourself about things you don't see;

2. When possible, always look at least twice in all directions before maneuvering into, or across, a lane, whether you see traffic the first time or not; and
3. Remember that motorcycles, bicyclists, and even pedestrians can be in the roadway as well—it isn't simply being traveled by cars and trucks—so remain vigilant and carefully look for all potential hazards.

As you can tell, when we are driving, we have a tendency to ignore our five senses until they become stimulated, and this is certainly true with vision. There have been countless studies pointing to the fact that, on many occasions, our vision cannot be trusted to present the whole truth. So, when you are traveling, do the best you can to pay attention to everything within your field of vision because missing a warning sign or an approaching hazard can have catastrophic consequences.

Let's bring this session to a close; good luck on the exam.

*Notes:*

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## LESSON 7 EXAM

1. It is possible to look directly at an object and not see it:

True: \_\_\_\_\_.

False: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The inability to see something within our field of vision is a definition of:

a.) Inattentional Blindness.

b.) Driver Conditioning.

c.) Mental Compromise.

d.) Not paying attention.

e.) Vision tricks.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Change blindness, attentional blindness, and Inattentional Blindness are similar, in that they pertain to situations that result in drivers not seeing things that are in plain view:

True: \_\_\_\_\_.

False: \_\_\_\_\_.

## LESSON 8

# “How DARE You!”

You know, when it comes to driving, everything is serious. But occasionally there are some things that are made *MORE* serious than they should be.

To this point in our lesson series we have focused on how we are impacted by cognitive issues—the mental aspects of driving—that are caused, or influenced, by Driver Conditioning. In other words, we have covered how losing focus on our driving environment, and/or making poor choices can result in negative consequences. But there are other problems that can be created when we make a mistake besides causing a crash, and that is when we make a mistake that causes another driver to lose control of their temper.

Certainly, we have no control over the behavior of others. If we did, we would make sure everyone treated us in a respectful way. But just as Driver Conditioning can cause all of us to lose focus on our driving environment and increase the risk of us making a mistake, it can also influence the behavior of other drivers in a negative way. To put this in the simplest of terms, when we make a mistake or do something that makes another driver “mad,” they can become emboldened to take risks that could become life-threatening for us.

Road rage is a topic not frequently discussed because we don't actually witness it very often. However, when it does take place, the person under attack can be quite shaken, or even killed in extreme cases. An example of that took place during rush hour in one major city, when a driver changed lanes and mistakenly pulled in front of another vehicle a little too close for comfort. It was apparent that the driver who pulled in front of the other car didn't see that vehicle.

But rather than simply ignoring the error or using his horn to politely alert the driver to his mistake, the driver of the car that was cut off lost control of his emotions and began following the other vehicle closely, looking for an opportunity to pass. His purpose was to go around, and then pull in front of the careless driver so he could "teach him a lesson." When that opportunity presented itself, the driver wasted no time and, once in front, began harassing the other driver by suddenly applying his brakes, then speeding up only to apply his brakes again.

This went on for several minutes when the angry driver applied his brakes one last time. In the attempt to avoid hitting the car in front of him, the driver who earlier had simply made a mistake ended up losing control of his vehicle, spun into the median and crashed. Both he and his passenger were killed—all because he made a mistake and another driver wasn't adult enough to react in a responsible way.

Irresponsibility and road rage go hand-in-hand, and that scenario is becoming more of a problem as we all deal with the building pressures of everyday life. One who normally is calm and peaceful can “lose it” under the wrong circumstances; and, of course, there are always those who are prone to anger just because they don’t like it when someone interferes with their world.

For those few of you who may fall into that second category, those of you who may be prone to anger, I would suggest to you that vehicular homicide is a very serious matter and can lead to spending many years in prison—not to mention the mental and emotional aspect of having killed someone for no reason. I think if given time for rational thought, you would decide to react differently.

So let me offer some help for you. Since everyone makes mistakes, including yourself, and since you probably don’t want to spend years of your life locked up in prison, may I recommend that you try this simple technique in order to avoid the rage you feel when someone else makes a mistake.

What I suggest is that you consider your best friend as being the driver of the car that just got in your way. Recognize it for what it is, an unintentional mistake, and forgive them—immediately. If you do that, it can help you avoid the negative consequences of making an even bigger mistake than the person who angered you.

And of course, there are programs on anger management to help people control that emotion. Attending such classes

when needed with the honest intent of getting rid of your anger issue is a positive decision—one that is good for both you and others around you.

Let's take a moment and review some tips on how to behave if you are on the receiving end of some else's road rage. The most obvious thing we can do, and the quickest, is to simply hold up your hand in a non-threatening way and "mouth" the words, *"I'm sorry;"* if you are in view of the other driver. Sometimes that can dissolve the tension immediately.

If that cannot be done, at the very least, remain calm and don't do anything to add to the tension. Continue to drive as though nothing occurred. Avoid eye contact unless it is to say "I'm sorry!" and remain alert to your surroundings and the location of other vehicles.

Often times, if you are approaching an exit you intend to take, the situation may resolve itself if the other driver isn't going in the same direction, and chooses not to follow you.

But if that doesn't seem to be the case, and the situation appears to be getting worse, if you have a passenger, have them call 911 and report the incident, along with the license plate ID of the other vehicle. If you don't have a passenger, and you believe you are in danger, you may have no choice but to attempt to call 911 yourself; but do so using extreme caution. You don't want to take your eyes off the road at the wrong time and end up in a crash.

Never pull over and stop your vehicle in order to confront another driver exhibiting road rage. And, if a minor collision

occurs with that driver, rather than pull over, drive to the nearest police or fire station if their location is known; or, after calling 911, arrange to meet an officer at a specific location.

If the irate driver is intent on following you, do not drive home or to the home of a friend. When dealing with road rage, the potential actions of the other driver are unknown and it is best not to involve others. If there are no other alternatives, and you must stop, only do so in a populated area where there is a large number of people.

Above all, maintain control of yourself and remain calm; it doesn't take much to stir additional anger in another driver when they are already out of control.

Some of the actions that are known to trigger road rage are:

- Driving slowly in the left lane;
- Insulting or inappropriate gestures;
- Cutting off another vehicle;
- Stopping rather than merging when entering a freeway;
- Tailgating;
- Excessive delay when responding to a "green" light; and
- Lagging behind when traffic is heavy.

Certainly, there are many other actions that can create hostility in another driver. But except for that "gesture" thing, those acts can simply be an honest mistake where no harm is done.

Above all, always have patience with others...and forgive.

*Notes:*

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## LESSON 8 EXAM

1. When confronted by an angry, unreasonable or unsafe driver, it is best to:

- a.) Drive home immediately.
- b.) Call a friend for help.
- c.) Pull over to discuss the matter calmly.
- d.) Speed away.
- e.) Call 911.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. To help avoid creating anger in another driver:

- a.) Always drive slower than other vehicles.
- b.) Never pull onto a freeway at a speed greater than 50 MPH.
- c.) A and B are correct.
- d.) There are no known ways to reduce the risk of road rage.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When a minor crash results from road rage:

- a.) Stop and exchange insurance information.
- b.) Drive home as quickly as possible.
- c.) Stop and let the driver know you do not appreciate their childish behavior
- d.) Don't stop, and call 911.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Road rage is a serious matter. If you or a friend have difficulty controlling your temper when another driver makes a mistake, you should:

- a.) Seek anger control/management classes.
- b.) Consider those who offend you a friend and forgive them.



- c.) Realize even you make mistakes.
- d.) All of the above.
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is one thing to keep in mind when a driver's actions anger you?

- a.) He's probably never driven before.
- b.) She's probably a terrible person.
- c.) How DARE he/she?
- d.) All drivers make mistakes due to the effects of Driver Conditioning—even me!
- e.) They are an idiot.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 9

# What if...?

Throughout this text, we have attempted to ingrain in you just how easy it is to make a mistake while driving and that even if you attempt to drive perfectly at all times, there are mental aspects of driving that are beyond your control, and the odds are, you will find yourself involved in at least one mishap in a vehicle during your lifetime.

But having covered this, we would be falling short of our purpose if we simply told you about The Hidden Dangers of Driving without offering some thoughts about how you can minimize the effects of Driver Conditioning.

So, over the next few pages, I want to share with you some things you can do to help both you and others remain safer when traveling. I will first provide a list followed by a more in-depth explanation. To minimize the negative effects of Driver Conditioning:

1. When possible, do not initiate a maneuver with your vehicle that will cause another driver to have to respond.
2. Train yourself, allow yourself to be conditioned, to perform certain acts at specific times when confronted with specific stimuli.

3. Do your best to maintain concentration on your driving environment by asking yourself, “What if...?”
4. Create habits that promote safe driving practices.
5. Before entering an intersection or crossing a highway on a green light, make sure all crossing traffic is either stopped or is coming to a stop.
6. Make decisions that will keep you from forming bad habits.

The first thing to keep in mind is: **When possible, do not initiate a maneuver with your vehicle that will cause another driver to have to respond.** Obviously, if you pull out in front of a motorist who is not paying attention, a collision can occur if that driver does not respond properly or quickly enough. Although I don’t want to belabor the point, I do want this to stick with you; so, one more time, *when possible, DO NOT initiate a maneuver with your vehicle that will cause another driver to have to respond.*

Number two: **train yourself, allow yourself to be conditioned, to perform certain acts at specific times when confronted with specific stimuli**, so that even if you are not paying attention to what you are doing, your “default” action is one that promotes safety rather than a hazard.

For example, when I turn into a residential neighborhood, I automatically slow down and begin looking under parked vehicles that are ahead of me to make sure I don’t see any

little feet, or animals, that might run out in front of me. And if I can't see due to darkness, or because my view is obstructed, I will automatically not only slow down but I will also take my foot off of the gas and hold it over the brake pedal, just in case I have to stop quickly. That is something that I do automatically; without thought. I have conditioned myself, I have trained myself, to respond to that stimulus, neighborhood driving, automatically—in other words, Automaticity comes into play.

I could give you dozens of more examples of how you can condition yourself to automatically respond properly to a number of different scenarios; but in reality, we have already taught you to do that yourself. In other words, you have learned through this series of lessons to always make the right choices; and when you do that continuously without fail, over and over, a habit can be formed and you will perform those tasks automatically—they will be the action you default to without thought.

Number three, while traveling, **do your best to maintain concentration on your driving environment; but if you find you are losing focus, ask yourself, “What if...?”** then present various scenarios to yourself that apply to your driving situation. For example, if you are losing focus while driving on the freeway you could ask yourself, “What if the driver in front of me brakes suddenly?” Asking that question can make you aware that you may be following too closely.

Or, you could ask, “What if the driver in the lane next to me doesn't see me and has to change lanes suddenly?” Asking

that question can alert you to the fact that you should move forward to let the other driver know you are there, or to slow down so you can make room for that vehicle, just in case the driver needs to change lanes quickly.

If driving at night, and you find you are not paying attention, you could ask yourself, “What if there is something in the road ahead of me or around the next curve;” or, “what if a deer or other animal runs in front of my vehicle?” Asking those questions will not only help bring your attention back to the highway but also help you avoid being surprised by those events, just in case they would happen.

The number of questions you could ask yourself is endless...all helping to keep your focus on driving. Remember, when we are not focused, our ability to recognize potential hazards is drastically reduced and our response time to a potential hazard is delayed.

Number four, you can **create habits that promote safe driving practices**. For example, once you are comfortably positioned in the driver’s seat, before starting the engine, try saying “A, B, C,” and give each letter a task. “A” could stand for “Adjust mirrors;” “B” could stand for “Buckle-up;” and “C” could stand for, “Check all traffic and pedestrian flows before moving.” Saying out loud or to yourself, “A – B – C” each time you sit behind the wheel, can help you condition yourself to automatically complete those actions when you get into your vehicle.

Number five, **before entering an intersection or crossing a highway on a green light, make sure all crossing traffic is either stopped or is coming to a stop**; do this intentionally every time; make it a habit, so that when you are not paying attention, Automaticity can take over and you will perform that action automatically.

Number six, **make decisions that will keep you from forming bad habits**. *Don't ever* drive without you, and everyone else in your vehicle, being buckled up; *never* make the decision to text just one time, or drink and drive just one time—because, as you know, not experiencing a negative consequence when committing an irresponsible act, is registered in our mind as positive reinforcement and can lead to that improper action becoming a habit.

That brings us to the end of this chapter. But before moving on to the test, take a few minutes to follow the suggestion in Number Four above and list some other actions that you can implement in order to help yourself create positive habits.

*Notes:*

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## LESSON 9 EXAM

1. When you notice that you are not focused on your driving environment, what is one way to help bring your attention back to your driving?

a.) Ask yourself “\_\_\_\_\_ ...?”

2. After asking yourself the question above, what do you do?

a.) Recognize how you would respond to different actions of other drivers.

b.) Think about your day.

c.) Identify how you would respond to particular hazards.

d.) Question the motive behind the actions of other drivers.

e.) Both A and C are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Repeating an irresponsible behavior:

a.) Can lead to a habit.

b.) Has no influence over highway safety if done after considering the consequences.

c.) Is, by definition, “irresponsible.”

d.) Can lead to automatically repeating that behavior when not desirable.

e.) A, C, and D are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. When traveling through a green light:

a.) All systems “Go!”

b.) Proceed with caution.

c.) It is safe to proceed.

d.) You should stop anyway to make sure there is no oncoming traffic.

e.) You should have no concerns.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## FINAL MESSAGE

This brings us to the end of our program and the “all-dreaded” final exam. But before we move on, I want to take a few minutes to briefly cover a couple of things I believe will be of value to you. First, although we touched on impaired driving in a few of our lessons, I want to add one more thought.

As dangerous as driving is, with all the thought processes, or lack of thought, that contribute to our inattention when we are operating a vehicle, I want you to remember that driving is dangerous enough without adding the element of intoxication, or any other impairment for that matter. Regardless of what it is, huffing, prescription drugs, illegal drugs, alcohol, marijuana,—they all add to the dangers of driving. So use your common sense and don’t *ever* drive under the influence of any mind-altering substance, and equally as important, *don’t ride with anyone who does*. In fact, even if you make others angry, don’t allow anyone to drive impaired. You may never know for sure, but you might just be saving their life or the lives of their potential victims.

Secondly, something we didn’t touch on—technology is improving all the time. As technology improves, more and more vehicles are being equipped with anti-collision devices which include warning sounds when your vehicle drifts out



of its lane, and automatic braking; some cars, as you know, can park themselves. In the not-too-distant future, we will be traveling in vehicles that drive us to our destination. As you know, the technology is here, it just needs to be more fully developed and implemented.

But this is what I want you to remember about technology: *not all cars will be equipped with the same safety control devices...*the introduction of these new features will be staggered. So, if you become conditioned to rely on the features of one car, it will be easy to take that automatic behavior with you into a different vehicle where these features don't exist. Obviously, you don't want to rely on a particular system, developed to improve safety, in a vehicle that doesn't have that system. In other words, don't allow Automaticity to cause you to rely on a safety system or device that isn't there.

With that thought, there is one more story I would like to share with you. I recall talking to a young woman who had lived in England for several years with her husband before they return to the United States. She explained to me that one evening after dark, her husband told her that he needed something at the store and that he would be right back. Unfortunately, what he told his wife that evening wasn't true; because he didn't return home. In fact, he didn't make it to the store.

The reason he was killed that evening is because he wasn't focused on his driving. *When we don't focus on what we are doing, Automaticity can take over and our actions will follow*

*the pattern of behavior with which we are most familiar.* In this case, he had been used to driving on the left side of the road for years, and since he wasn't focused, he automatically followed his greatest instinct.

When we are comfortable in our driving environment, we stop paying attention. When we stop paying attention, we are more likely to make a mistake. And when that mistake is made at high speed...well, you know how that can turn out.

Let me close with some questions and one final thought—for just a moment I want you to think about your response to these questions. What do you want to accomplish in your life—what goals have you set for yourself? Have you developed a plan to achieve those goals? Do you intend to go to college after high school, join the military, attend a trade school, or go directly into the workforce?

Have you thought about who you are as a person? Have you considered who, or what, you want to become? As you look around and watch others who are faced with the same decisions that you face, what do you see? Do you see people that are sure of themselves, dedicated to achieving specific goals? Do you see some that are less focused on the decisions that lay ahead; those that live for the moment with little, or no regard, for tomorrow?

Where you want to go in your life, what you want to achieve, your destiny, does not depend on your desires—on what you want to happen. No! Your destiny, what you accomplish with

your life, is based in large part upon the decisions you make, and the consequences of those decisions.

So as we conclude this learning experience, I want you to hold on to the importance of decision-making. Because the decisions you make throughout your life, and the consequences of those decisions, will determine the man or woman you are to become.

As Matt said in the beginning of this program, I too wish I could tell you that by completing this course and taking the material you have learned to heart, you could avoid being in a crash. But I can't! All I can tell you, with some degree of certainty, is that every morning as you begin your day, you have an expectation of seeing another tomorrow.

My wish is that you do.

I hope you enjoyed learning about “*The Hidden Dangers of Driving*,” good luck on the final exam; stay safe!

*Notes:*

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## FINAL EXAM

1. The definition of Driver Conditioning is: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Who was responsible for the crash that killed Sandy and her mother?

- a.) Sandy was solely responsible for the crash;
- b.) Clearly, the driver of the vehicle that struck Sandy's car was at fault;
- c.) Sandy caused the crash, but everyone contributed to it;
- d.) All were equally at fault;
- e.) The driver that yielded to Sandy—he was at fault because he could have prevented the crash.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. This learning module was important because it taught me that:

- a.) Everyone makes mistakes;
- b.) When driving, no one pays attention 100% of the time;
- c.) All drivers should pay attention to what is going on around them;
- d.) Never drink and drive, no matter how good of a driver you think you might be;
- e.) All of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Matt made a poor decision that ended up causing someone's death. When comparing Matt's decision to drive home to Sandy's crash, what was the underlying cause of Matt's crash?

- a.) Driver Conditioning;
- b.) Driving drunk;
- c.) Having no concern for the safety of others;
- d.) Not thinking;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The underlying reason Sandy and her mother were killed is:

- a.) She stopped paying attention;
- b.) Sandy became conditioned to her driving environment;
- c.) She and her mother were engaged in conversation;
- d.) The other driver yielded to her;
- e.) Both A and D are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. When it comes to Driver Conditioning:

- a.) As long as you are aware of it, you will not be affected by it;
- b.) It is something that can be prevented;
- c.) It is only dangerous at night;
- d.) Driver's should not worry about it;
- e.) Most drivers are unaware it affects them.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Driver Conditioning and distracted driving are not the same.

True: \_\_\_\_\_

False \_\_\_\_\_

8. When we become comfortable in our environment, we:

- a.) Stop paying attention;
- b.) Allow our mind to focus on other things besides driving;
- b.) Miss seeing things right in front of us;
- d.) All of the above;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

9. The behavior of people is most often influenced by:

- a.) Conditioning;
- b.) Not wanting to conform;
- c.) Not paying attention;
- d.) A and C are correct;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

10. In the first example of a crash influenced by a traffic pattern change, when the two teenage girls and their grandmother were killed, in addition to the mistake made by the truck driver, who else could have prevented the crash?

- a.) The granddaughters—by watching traffic and warning their grandmother;
- b.) Highway officials—could have had additional traffic controls in place;
- c.) The grandmother;
- d.) All of the above;
- e.) No one else—the truck driver’s inattention caused the crash.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Mental Compromise has two sub-categories. They are:

- a.) Right and wrong;
- b.) Left and right;
- c.) Intentional and Unintentional;
- d.) With thought and without thought;
- e.) Both A and C are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Mental Compromise:

- a.) Is completely controllable;
- b.) Is unavoidable;
- c.) Can be prevented if we get plenty of rest;
- d.) Happens only at night;
- e.) Both A and C are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Cognitive Disengagement can occur:

- a.) Only at night;
- b.) Only when we are tired;
- c.) During short drives;
- d.) During long drives;
- e.) Both C and D are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

14. The best way to avoid Cognitive Disengagement is to:

- a.) Avoid long trips alone;
- b.) Stop every two to three hours to stretch your legs;
- c.) Listen to music;
- d.) All of the above;
- e.) Cognitive Disengagement is infrequent but unavoidable.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Cognitive Disengagement and Highway Hypnosis are:

- a.) The underlying cause of Driver Conditioning;
- b.) The same thing;
- c.) Completely controllable;
- d.) Somewhat similar;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

16. What activities are examples of Automaticity?

- a.) Brushing your teeth every morning;
- b.) Driving in unfamiliar territory late at night;
- c.) Driving in familiar territory and not remembering the trip.
- d.) A & C are correct;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

17. When it comes to time, taking my eyes off the road for just a moment has never been a problem; I've never experienced a crash or even come close to a crash. So what's the big deal?

- a.) It's not a big deal; don't worry about it!
- b.) My friends, even my parents, take their eyes off the road and they've never experienced a problem—neither will I;
- c.) Not looking at someone you are talking to is 'rude,' so looking at them for a tenth of a second is simply being polite and won't hurt a thing;
- d.) Any period of time I'm not watching where I'm going can result in a crash;
- e.) I can multi-task so looking at something else is not a problem as long as I can see the road in my peripheral vision.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



18. When remembering the Driver Conditioning organizational chart, from what did “distracted driving” result?

- a.) Intentional Mental Compromise;
- b.) Unintentional Mental Compromise;
- c.) Driver Conditioning;
- d.) Cognitive Disengagement;
- e.) Mental Compromise.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Traveling at 26 miles per hour, in one second, a vehicle can travel approximately:

- a.) The length of a football field;
- b.) Twenty-seven feet;
- c.) Ninety feet;
- d.) Forty feet;
- e.) It is difficult to determine how far it will travel.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

20. When traveling under normal conditions, the amount of time most drivers are focused primarily on their driving environment is believed to be:

- a.) Almost all of the time;
- b.) Unknown;
- c.) Over 25%;
- d.) Less than 10%;
- e.) Between thirty and sixty percent.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

21. When it comes to making decisions, it is easy to determine if the decision is right or wrong simply by experiencing the consequences of that decision.

True \_\_\_\_\_;

False \_\_\_\_\_.

22. When we are alone, we have the ability to choose to do anything we want to do.

True \_\_\_\_\_;

False \_\_\_\_\_.

23. Neutral experiences are always the result of right choices.

True \_\_\_\_\_;

False \_\_\_\_\_.

24. Repetition of an action can lead to it becoming a:

a.) Safe choice;

b.) Guaranteed response;

c.) Habit.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

25. It is hard to develop a bad habit because we have been taught what's right and wrong.

True \_\_\_\_\_;

False \_\_\_\_\_.

26. If I ALWAYS make the right choice when driving, it is probable that I will never be involved in a mishap.

True: \_\_\_\_\_;

False: \_\_\_\_\_.

27. The only way to avoid being in a crash is to never get into a car.

True: \_\_\_\_\_;

False: \_\_\_\_\_.

28. “I don’t want people to think I am afraid to text” is an example of:

- a.) Confidence;
- b.) Stubbornness;
- c.) Convenience;
- d.) Consideration;
- e.) Embarrassment.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

29. “I have to get this information to my friend and don’t have time to stop” is most likely an example of:

- a.) Convenience;
- b.) Confidence;
- c.) Embarrassment;
- d.) Consideration;
- e.) Both A and D are correct.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

30. “Texting is not a problem to me because I am good at multi-tasking” is an example of:

- a.) Embarrassment;
- b.) Confidence;
- c.) Multi-tasking;
- d.) Intoxication;
- e.) Convenience.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

31. When a driver feels they are incapable of error and have no regard for the safety of others, it is an example of a lack of:

- a.) Consideration;
- b.) Knowledge;
- c.) Understanding;
- d.) Recognition;
- e.) Respect.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

32. When a driver believes they will never experience negative consequences to inappropriate behavior, they most likely lack:

- a.) Respect;
- b.) Judgement;
- c.) A smartphone;
- d.) Knowledge;
- e.) Understanding.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

33. When a driver is unfamiliar with a potential problem or danger due to lack of information or training, they lack:

- a.) Judgement;
- b.) Understanding;
- c.) Respect;
- d.) Awareness of national or local news;
- e.) Knowledge.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

34. It is possible to look directly at an object and not see it:

True \_\_\_\_\_;

False \_\_\_\_\_.

35. The inability to see something within our field of vision is a definition of:

- a.) Not paying attention;
- b.) Driver Conditioning;
- c.) Inattentional Blindness;
- d.) Mental Compromise;
- e.) Vision tricks.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

36. Change blindness, attentional blindness, and Inattentional Blindness are similar, in that they pertain to situations that result in drivers not seeing things that are in plain view:

True \_\_\_\_\_;

False \_\_\_\_\_.

37. When confronted with an unsafe or unreasonable driver, it is best to:

- a.) Speed away;
- b.) Call 911;
- c.) Pull over to discuss the matter calmly;
- d.) Call a friend for help;
- e.) Drive home immediately.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

38. To help avoid creating anger in another driver:

- a.) Always drive slower than other vehicles;
- b.) Never pull onto a freeway at a speed greater than 50 MPH;
- c.) A and B are correct;
- d.) There are no known ways to reduce the risk of road rage;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

39. What is one thing to keep in mind when a driver's actions anger you?

- a.) They are an idiot.
- b.) All drivers make mistakes due to the effects of Driver Conditioning – even me!
- c.) How DARE he?
- d.) She's probably a terrible person.
- e.) He's probably never driven before.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

40. When a minor crash results from road rage:

- a.) Stop and exchange insurance information;
- b.) Don't stop, and call 911;
- c.) Stop and let the driver know you do not appreciate their childish behavior;
- d.) Drive home as quickly as possible;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

41. Road rage is a serious matter. If you or a friend has difficulty controlling your temper when another driver makes a mistake, you should:

- a.) Seek/recommend anger management classes;
- b.) Consider those who offend you to be a friend and forgive them;
- c.) Realize even you make mistakes;
- d.) All of the above;
- e.) None of the above.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

42. When you notice that you are not focused on your driving environment, what is one way to help bring your attention back on your driving?

Ask yourself “\_\_\_\_\_ ...?”

43. After asking yourself the question above, what do you do?

- a.) Identify how you would respond to particular hazards;
- b.) Recognize how you would respond to different actions of other drivers;
- c.) Question the motive behind the actions of other *drivers*;
- d.) Both A and B are correct;
- e.) Think about your day.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

45. Repeating an irresponsible behavior:

- a.) is, by definition, “irresponsible”;
- b.) can lead to automatically repeating that behavior when not desirable;
- c.) has no influence over highway safety if done after considering the consequences;
- d.) A, B, and E are correct;
- e.) can lead to a habit.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

46. When traveling through a green light:

- a.) All systems “Go!”
- b.) You should stop anyway to make sure there is no oncoming traffic;
- c.) It is safe to proceed;
- d.) Proceed with caution;
- e.) You should have no concerns.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_





## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Automaticity** - the processing of information in a way that is automatic and involuntary, occurring without conscious control.

**Cognitive Disengagement** - a period when we are not consciously aware of our surroundings. Cognitive Disengagement is usually experienced intermittently during long periods of driving or when driving in areas that are extremely familiar to us.

**Driver Conditioning** - the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance.

**Highway Hypnosis** - a trance-like state experienced by fatigued motorists during periods of monotonous travel.

**Inattentional Blindness** - the failure to see objects in our field of vision—even when looking at them—due to attention being focused elsewhere.

**Intentional Mental Compromise** - knowingly taking our focus away from the act of driving to engage in other activities, conversations, or thought.

**Mental Compromise** - a period when our awareness of the act of driving becomes secondary as our primary attention is placed on other matters.

**Unintentional Mental Compromise** - takes place when our thought processes take over involuntarily and consider past, present, or future events that influence, or may touch our lives.

## LESSON 1 EXAM

### ANSWERS

1. Who was responsible for the crash that killed Sandy and her mother?  
**e.) Sandy caused the crash, but everyone contributed to it.**
2. This learning module was important because it taught me that:
  - a.) Everyone makes mistakes.
  - b.) Not everyone pays attention when they drive.
  - c.) All drivers should pay attention to what is going on around them.
  - d.) Never drink and drive, no matter how good of a driver you think you might be.
  - e.) All of the above.**
3. Matt made a poor decision that ended up causing someone's death. When comparing Sandy's crash to Matt's decision to drive home, what was the underlying cause of Matt's crash?  
**b.) Driver Conditioning.**

## LESSON 2 EXAM

### ANSWERS

1. The definition of Driver Conditioning is: the process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to **traffic patterns** and **road conditions** that remain consistent over an undefined period of **time** or **distance**.
2. The underlying reason Sandy and her mother were killed is:  
**d.) Sandy became conditioned to her driving environment.**

3. When we become comfortable in our environment, we:
  - a.) Stop paying attention.
  - b.) Focus on other things besides driving.
  - c.) Miss seeing things right in front of us.
  - d.) All of the above.**
4. The behavior of people is most often influenced by:  
**b.) Conditioning.**
5. In the first example of a crash influenced by a traffic pattern change, when the two teenage girls and their grandmother were killed, in addition to the mistake made by the truck driver, who else could have prevented the crash?
  - a.) The granddaughters—by watching traffic and warning their grandmother.
  - b.) Highway officials—could have had additional traffic controls in place.
  - c.) The grandmother.
  - d.) All of the above.**
6. When it comes to Driver Conditioning:  
**a.) Most drivers are unaware it affects them.**
7. Driver Conditioning is the same as distracted driving.  
**False.**

### LESSON 3 EXAM

#### ANSWERS

1. Mental Compromise has two sub-categories. They are:  
**d.) Intentional or Unintentional.**
2. Mental Compromise:  
**d.) Is unavoidable.**

3. Cognitive Disengagement occurs:
  - b.) During long drives.
  - c.) During short drives.
  - d.) Both B and C are correct.**
4. The best way to avoid Cognitive Disengagement is to:
  - e.) Cognitive Disengagement is infrequent but unpreventable.**
5. Cognitive Disengagement and Highway Hypnosis are:
  - d.) Dangerous mental states.**
6. What activities are examples of Automaticity?
  - b.) Driving in familiar territory and not remembering the trip.**
7. When remembering the Driver Conditioning organizational chart, from what did “distracted driving” result?
  - d.) Intentional Mental Compromise.**

## LESSON 4 EXAM

### ANSWERS

1. – When it comes to time, taking my eyes off the road for just a moment has never been a problem; I’ve never experienced a crash or even come close to a crash. So what’s the big deal?
  - c.) Any period of time I’m not watching where I’m going can result in a crash.**
2. Traveling at 26 miles per hour, in one second, a vehicle can travel approximately:
  - a.) Forty feet.**

3. When traveling under normal conditions, the amount of time most drivers are focused primarily on their driving environment is believed to be:

**b.) Less than 10%.**

## **LESSON 5 EXAM**

### ANSWERS

1. When it comes to making decisions, it is easy to determine if the decision is right or wrong simply by experiencing the consequences of that decision.

**False.**

2. When we are alone, we have the ability to choose to do anything we want to do.

**True.**

3. Neutral experiences are always the result of right choices.

**False.**

4. Repetition of an action can lead to it becoming a:

**a.) Habit.**

5. It is hard to develop a bad habit because we have been taught what's right and wrong.

**False.**

6. If I ALWAYS make the right choice when driving, it is probable that I will never be involved in a wreck.

**False.**

7. The only way to avoid ever being in a crash is to never get into a car.

**True.**

## LESSON 6 EXAM

### Group 1 ANSWERS

1. *“I don’t want people to think I am afraid to text”* is an example of:  
**b.) Embarrassment.**
2. *“I have to get this information to my friend and don’t have time to stop”* is most likely an example of:  
b.) Convenience.  
d.) Consideration.  
**e.) Both B and D are correct.**
3. *“Texting is not a problem to me because I am good at multi-tasking”* is an example of:  
**c.) Confidence.**
4. When a driver feels they are incapable of error and have no regard for the safety of others, it is an example of a lack of:  
**c.) Respect.**
5. When a driver believes they will never experience negative consequences to inappropriate behavior, they most likely lack:  
**a.) Judgement.**
6. When a driver is unfamiliar with a potential problem or danger due to lack of information or training, they lack:  
**a.) Knowledge.**

## LESSON 7 EXAM

### ANSWERS

1. It is possible to look directly at an object and not see it:  
**True.**

2. The inability to see something within our field of vision is a definition of:

**a.) Inattentional Blindness.**

3. Change blindness, attentional blindness, and Inattentional Blindness are similar, in that they pertain to situations that result in drivers not seeing things that are in plain view:

**True.**

## **LESSON 8 EXAM**

### ANSWERS

1. When confronted by an angry, unreasonable or unsafe driver, it is best to:

**e.) Call 911.**

2. To help avoid creating anger in another driver:

**e.) None of the above.**

3. When a minor crash results from road rage:

**d.) Don't stop, and call 911.**

4. Road rage is a serious matter. If you or a friend has difficulty controlling your temper when another driver makes a mistake, you should:

a.) Seek anger control/management classes.

b.) Consider those who offend you a friend and forgive them.

c.) Realize even you make mistakes.

**d.) All of the above.**

5. What is one thing to keep in mind when a driver's actions anger you?

**d.) All drivers make mistakes due to the effects of Driver Conditioning—even me!**

## LESSON 9 EXAM

### ANSWERS

1. When you notice that you are not focused on your driving environment, what is one way to help bring your attention back to your driving?

**a.) Ask yourself “*What if...?*”**

2. After asking yourself the question above, what do you do?

a.) Recognize how you would respond to different actions of other drivers.

c.) Identify how you would respond to particular hazards.

**e.) Both A and C are correct.**

3. Repeating an irresponsible behavior:

a.) Can lead to a habit.

c.) Is, by definition, “irresponsible.”

d. Can lead to automatically repeating that behavior when not desirable.

**e.) A, C, and D are correct.**

4. When traveling through a green light:

**b.) Proceed with caution.**



## FINAL EXAM

### ANSWERS

1. The definition of Driver Conditioning is: ***The process through which drivers become conditioned to respond to traffic patterns and road conditions that remain consistent over an undefined period of time or distance.***
2. Who was responsible for the crash that killed Sandy and her mother?  
**c.) Sandy caused the crash, but everyone contributed to it.**
3. This learning module was important because it taught me that:
  - a.) Everyone makes mistakes;
  - b.) When driving, no one pays attention 100% of the time;
  - c.) All drivers should pay attention to what is going on around them;
  - d.) Never drink and drive, no matter how good of a driver you think you might be;
  - e.) All of the above.**
4. Matt made a poor decision that ended up causing someone's death. When comparing Matt's decision to drive home to Sandy's crash, what was the underlying cause of Matt's crash?  
**a.) Driver Conditioning.**
5. The underlying reason Sandy and her mother were killed is:  
**b.) Sandy became conditioned to her driving environment.**

6. When it comes to Driver Conditioning:

**e.) Most drivers are unaware it affects them.**

7. Driver Conditioning and distracted driving are not the same.

**True.**

8. When we become comfortable in our environment, we:

a.) Stop paying attention;

b.) Allow our mind to focus on other things besides driving;

c.) Miss seeing things right in front of us;

**d.) All of the above.**

9. The behavior of people is most often influenced by:

**a.) Conditioning.**

10. In the first example of a crash influenced by a traffic pattern change, when the two teenage girls and their grandmother were killed, in addition to the mistake made by the truck driver, who else could have prevented the crash?

a.) The granddaughters—by watching traffic and warning their grandmother;

b.) Highway officials—could have had additional traffic controls in place;

c.) The grandmother;

**d.) All of the above.**

11. Mental Compromise has two sub-categories. They are:

**c.) Intentional and Unintentional.**

12. Mental Compromise:

**b.) Is unavoidable.**

13. Cognitive Disengagement can occur:

c.) During short drives;

d.) During long drives;

**e.) Both C and D are correct.**

14. The best way to avoid Cognitive Disengagement is to:  
**e.) Cognitive Disengagement is infrequent but unavoidable.**
15. Cognitive Disengagement and Highway Hypnosis are:  
**e.) None of the above.**
16. What activities are examples of automaticity?  
**c.) Driving in familiar territory and not remembering the trip.**
17. When it comes to time, taking my eyes off the road for just a moment has never been a problem; I've never experienced a crash or even come close to a crash. So what's the big deal?  
**d.) Any period of time I'm not watching where I'm going can result in a crash.**
18. When remembering the Driver Conditioning organizational chart, from what did "distracted driving" result?  
**a.) Intentional Mental Compromise.**
19. Traveling at 26 miles per hour, in one second, a vehicle can travel approximately:  
**d.) Forty feet.**
20. When traveling under normal conditions, the amount of time most drivers are focused primarily on their driving environment is believed to be:  
**d.) Less than 10%.**
21. When it comes to making decisions, it is easy to determine if the decision is right or wrong simply by  
**False.**

22. When we are alone, we have the ability to choose to do anything we want to do.

**True.**

23. Neutral experiences are always the result of right choices.

**False.**

24. Repetition of an action can lead to it becoming a:

**c.) Habit.**

25. It is hard to develop a bad habit because we have been taught what's right and wrong.

**False.**

26. If I ALWAYS make the right choice when driving, it is probable that I will never be involved in a mishap.

**False.**

27. The only way to avoid being in a crash is to never get into a car.

**True.**

28. "I don't want people to think I am afraid to text" is an example of:

**e.) Embarrassment.**

29. "I have to get this information to my friend and don't have time to stop" is most likely an example of:

a.) Convenience;

d.) Consideration;

**e.) Both A and D are correct.**

30. "Texting is not a problem to me because I am good at multi-tasking" is an example of:

**b.) Confidence.**

31. When a driver feels they are incapable of error and have no regard for the safety of others, it is an example of a lack of:

**e.) Respect.**

32. When a driver believes they will never experience negative consequences to inappropriate behavior, they most likely lack:

**b.) Judgement.**

33. When a driver is unfamiliar with a potential problem or danger due to lack of information or training, they lack:

**e.) Knowledge.**

34. It is possible to look directly at an object and not see it:

**True.**

35. The inability to see something within our field of vision is a definition of:

**c.) Inattentional Blindness.**

36. Change blindness, attentional blindness, and Inattentional Blindness are similar, in that they pertain to situations that result in drivers not seeing things that are in plain view:

**True.**

37. When confronted with an unsafe or unreasonable driver, it is best to:

**b.) Call 911.**

38. To help avoid creating anger in another driver:

**e.) None of the above.**

39. What is one thing to keep in mind when a driver's actions anger you?

**b.) All drivers make mistakes due to the effects of Driver Conditioning – even me!**

40. When a minor crash results from road rage:

**b.) Don't stop, and call 911.**

41. Road rage is a serious matter. If you or a friend has difficulty controlling your temper when another driver makes a mistake, you should:

a.) Seek/recommend anger management classes;

b.) Consider those who offend you a friend and forgive them;

c.) Realize even you make mistakes;

**d.) All of the above.**

42. When you notice that you are not focused on your driving environment, what is one way to help bring your attention back to your driving?

Ask yourself **“What if...?”**

43. After asking yourself the question above, what do you do?

b.) Recognize how you would respond to different actions of other drivers.

**c.) Both B and D are correct.**

d.) Identify how you would respond to particular hazards.

45. Repeating an irresponsible behavior:

a.) Is, by definition, “irresponsible.”

b.) Can lead to automatically repeating that behavior when not desirable.

**d.) A, B, and E are correct.**

e.) Can lead to a habit.

46. When traveling through a green light:

**d.) Proceed with caution.**