

Managing Road Rage

If you own a car and have been on a highway, then you've been exposed to it. The cause of road rage is quite simple. There are too many cars on highways that are not adequate to handle the current volume of traffic. Under these conditions, people become frustrated because they can't get to where they want to go as fast as they want to get there. These conditions are such that they have bred two characters that now inhabit our roads, the road idiot and the road rager. These two characters are capable of bringing out the worst in the best of us. First, let's look at the behavior of the road idiot:

- The person who weaves in and out of traffic at high speed, changing from one lane to the other.
- The slow poke in the fast lane that refuses to move over, creating a dangerous situation as people attempt to pass.
- The person who is late for work, or an appointment, and gets frustrated with what they deem as slow moving traffic and takes reckless chances.
- The person who drives behind you at night and keeps on his high beams.
- The person who cuts into your lane without signaling and without looking to see if there is enough room
- The person driving under the speed limit on a two-lane highway with no place to pass while you're on a tight time schedule.
- The people who won't let you pass. When you increase your speed to pass them, they increase their speed to impede your ability to pass. This is particularly frustrating when you're on a two-lane highway and there are only a few places where you can pass.
- The person who is driving next to you at 75 miles per hour and has a newspaper or a magazine on his steering wheel and is reading while driving.
- The woman who, while driving along, uses the back up mirror to put on her makeup and style her hair.
- The person who is on a cellular phone, holding it with one hand, and keeps taking his other hand off the wheel to make gestures.
- The driver who has a car full of people and finds it necessary when he is talking to make eye contact with the people in the back seat. His eyes seem to be focused everywhere except on the road.
- This person is most difficult to spot because there are no outward manifestations of his behavior: the person who is distracted from his major task behind the wheel, i.e., driving, because his mind is involved with such thoughts as ruminating about past business or social events or planning what he has to do when he gets to where he is going.
- The person who finds the road idiot's behavior so unacceptable that he reacts to it with road rage; then these two people become a danger to everyone else on the road.

Now the next person I want to look at is the road rager. This is the person we can all become until we change the way we view and react to the road idiot. I would like to recommend that whenever you are driving your car you must believe that you are in a sea of insanity and you are the only sane one there. Also, believe that maneuvering in this sea of insanity will take both your physical and mental skill if you are to survive. Physical skill to be able to be in control of your car and mental skill in order to be in control of yourself! Both are equally important and are interrelated. What creates road rage and ultimately makes you a road idiot is not the idiot; it's how you choose to react to the idiot. That's right, how you choose to react to the idiot. If you react with rage and anger then you also become a road idiot. However, if you choose to look at the particular incident when it occurs without bringing in your thoughts and emotions, which will influence how you behave, you will see it for what it really is, a road idiot who is out of control and really does not see how his idiotic behavior is a danger on the road. If you follow this approach you will eventually not see how his idiotic behavior is a danger on the road. If you follow this approach you will eventually develop the skill to recognize the road idiots for what they are and not get sucked into raging. If you are now a road rager or a road idiot you know you must change. Change is not easy. However, it is possible.

And that's what's so great about being a human homo-sapien. If you're a cat, giraffe or a rooster, your behavior is unchangeable. When you initiate change, be patient and keep in mind that the changes you wish to make take time, effort and commitment on your part to acquire. If you're a road rager, then you must change the way you react to the road idiot. Having the idiot on the road is bad enough. However, when you react to the idiot with rage then there are two idiots on the road. Remember that you can't control the way the other person drives. When the idiot does something that annoys you let them – and **let the incident go**. Don't let your ego get involved with such rage, creating thoughts as, “the son of a bitch can't do that to me. I'll show him.” Instead, laugh at his stupid idiotic behavior and let it go – that's right, let it go. If you don't let it go he's going to control you through you for the rest of the commute or possibly even after the commute. **See it as it really is**. Don't let your thoughts and emotion get involved. After the idiotic incident is over – **it's over** – unless you perpetuate the incident in your mind – then it's not over and it will fester in your mind until your rage makes you a road idiot. One road idiot is enough, you don't need another. One road idiot is dangerous – two is disastrous and you don't want to be part of that behavior. Further, if you do catch up to the idiot and vent your rage, it's not going to change his overall behavior and you might kill yourself and others in the process. Also you really don't know how mentally stable the idiot might be or how unstable the road rage has made you! To sum up, here are some rules to keep in mind as you maneuver on the sea of insanity:

- If you're getting stressed and tense, take a deep breath and calm down.
- When observing the behavior of the road idiot, laugh at it. The laughter will act as a catalyst and an interruption device to help you to avoid raging.
- When observing the behavior of a road idiot be sure that you see things as they really are and don't color what you see with your thoughts and emotion. If you do that it could influence your behavior negatively.
- You'll have ample opportunity to see things as they really are as you drive. This will be a great help in teaching you how not to react with rage toward the road idiot.
- Remember you only have control over the way you drive your car. Therefore, when you are behind the wheel, give driving your complete attention and avoid any distraction from that task; even a small distraction could be fatal.
- If a road idiot wants to pass you, let them. Don't allow your ego to open the insanity door so that your rage makes you a road idiot.
- Don't allow your thoughts to draw your mind away from giving your driving your complete attention. This is not a time for communicating and planning. It's a time for driving only.
- Whenever you embark on a journey through the sea of insanity you will find that you will have ample opportunity to practice these new driving behaviors. Because these new behaviors could prove to be life-saving, and the life you save might be your own.