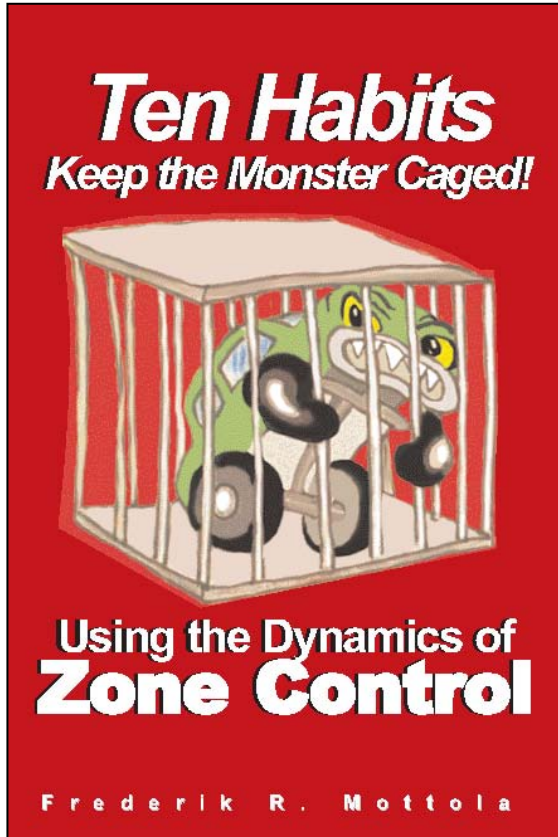


# Introduction

## Ten Habits of Zone Control



by

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### About The Author

Professor Frederik R. Mottola, a traffic safety educator, scientist, inventor, and author, is recognized as a national leader in driver behavior and teacher training.

He has developed crash-reducing programs for corporations, municipalities, police, military, emergency vehicle operators, and traffic safety educators, on local, national and international levels.

He has authored several books, videos series, CD-ROM programs, and online programs which have presented methods for drivers to develop perceptual awareness.

He has been featured in national publications and has received prestigious awards in recognition of the materials he has developed to help drivers reduce and manage risk.

### About This Book

What most drivers don't realize is that when a car goes out of control, it's not because a major thing has changed. It's usually a collection of little things: going a couple of miles faster, a slight downgrade, a patch of sand, someone pulling out in front of you—and when you put all these risk factors together, the car becomes a *monster*. The driver doesn't stand a chance!

This book explains and illustrates the dynamics of the Zone Control System. Drivers are able to practice into habit how to Find, Solve, and Control the Danger Zone, which is where crashes take place. These good habits put the driver in control and keep the *monster* from breaking out of its cage.



**W**hen the key is put into the ignition, the car is like a tamed animal, ready to obey the driver's every command. However, without proper management of vision, motion control, and space, it can quickly turn into a monster. The trick is to know what makes the car turn into a monster, how to prevent it, and how to keep the monster caged.

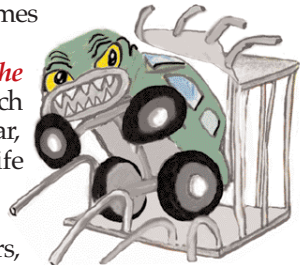
**"Caged" means "with constraints, to hold back, to have limitations."**



Drivers need to know when to hold back the power of the vehicle and how to determine when it is at its limitation. This is the problem! Drivers don't always know the limitations of the vehicle, the limitations of the roadway, or their own limitations. It is very common to be at the edge of the limitations without having any negative consequences. The driver may do something that is not safe, but nothing happens. The driver gets positive feedback for wrongful behavior. When this happens frequently, it leads to bad habits.

Then, it's merely a matter of time and circumstance before the monster breaks out of the cage. It doesn't take any skill for a driver to speed while entering a curve, resulting in the car careening off the edge of the road and embedding itself into a tree. However, it takes considerable skills to constrain the power of the vehicle. If a driver fails to keep the monster caged it becomes difficult — sometimes impossible — to get it back into a controlled state.

***No one wakes up believing that it is the start of the last day of their life.*** Yet, for more than 40,000 people each year, life ends on America's roadways. And each year, over 250,000 human beings have their quality of life drastically altered by permanent disabilities sustained during a car crash. These crashes are caused not only by teen drivers — they are caused by doctors, teachers, ministers, mothers, fathers, truck drivers, police officers, race car drivers, your friends, your relatives, drivers of all ages and of all educational backgrounds. The majority are good people who were suddenly confronted with a monstrous situation that was beyond their control.



**A crash can be classified into one of these categories:**

- The driver failed to have situational awareness to detect the potential crash.
- The limitation of the vehicle's traction control was exceeded.
- The driver failed to effectively use the vehicle's controls.
- The driver failed to detect and correct for others' wrongful actions.
- The driver performed a willful act of endangerment to oneself and to others.

No driver training system will be able to prevent crashes from a driver intent on performing without regard to the consequences. Nothing short of a series of psychological consultations will help that individual. However, for drivers that want to stay out of crashes this book will help evaluate their driving style and serve as a guide to the development of the empowering skills of the Zone Control System — skills that will give them a lifetime of crash free driving!

## Interact Courteously with Others

# 10

- Empower yourself and reduce stress by being courteous.
- Avoid competitive driving.
- Send and receive communications in a timely and positive manner.



### Are You A Psychological Time Bomb Behind the Wheel?

How easily do you become enraged by the actions other drivers take? How often do you get angry while driving? When you do get angry, do you take hostile, retaliatory actions? Do you engage in “road rage” behavior? We all have different levels of capacity before our emotional balloon explodes. Whether you have a large or small emotional balloon, you can eliminate it from becoming a psychological time bomb. Put yourself in control of your space requirements and eliminate stressful situations.

There is a lot of stress that creeps into our lives unnecessarily. One way to minimize stress is to eliminate some of the competitive situations that occur while driving. If you set your goal to strive for one or two times each day when you can be courteous to others, it can put you into a win-win situation. Helping someone gives you a good feeling, as compared to trying to compete with someone and losing. Spread some goodwill. Be courteous!

#### Be Effectively Courteous

To be courteous oftentimes means to merely maintain an attitude of consideration for the other driver. It may mean giving the other driver a break by applying your brake.

When a competitive driver cuts in front, the gap is small, and you may be forced to make a braking action, resulting in a lose-lose situation. A forced braking action is more stressful and more dangerous than willingly braking to help the driver out.

**Note:** The reason this is habit 10 is because to be effectively courteous you need to learn and use all habits 1 to 10.

Applying your brake momentarily while approaching an intersection will give an oncoming vehicle a larger gap to make a left turn successfully across your path. By seeing a car that is attempting to make a left turn, and opening the gap with a slight braking action, you avoid the trap of thinking the car will not cut in front of you. When all ten of the good habits stated in this manual become *your* habits, you will be in control of traffic situations rather than victimized by them, thereby increasing the capacity of your emotional balloon.

**Does it feel better to willfully give, or to have others steal from you?**

#### Communication Options

Surprises are great — or are they? A surprise graduation party or a surprise birthday party is fun. A surprise visit by your best friend would be welcome and enjoyable. A surprise inheritance of a million dollars from an unknown rich uncle can be very rewarding. However, a surprise reaction as the car in front of you slams on the brakes is not fun, is not welcome, is not rewarding! Such a surprise reaction would be very stressful and take away the independence you have over your actions. The driver in front was in control. Positioning your car so that you can see and be seen by others gains you independence.

Communication skills can help you to effectively see and be seen. As you do activities in this program, you will acquire many techniques for sending and receiving communications.

You will begin learning the 10 Habits of Zone Control by beginning with Habit 1.

# 1



## Establish Driver-Vehicle Readiness

- Driver Fitness: Mental/Physical
- Butt In Seating Position
- Safety Belts On, Head Restraints Up
- Doors Locked, Windows Up
- Headlights On During Daytime

### Would You Drive While Intoxicated?

The first of our ten habits is to establish driver-vehicle readiness. One way that many drivers unknowingly feed the monster is by driving while drowsy. *Research has revealed that driving while drowsy can be as significant a risk as driving while intoxicated.* We all know that we should not drive after drinking alcohol; and the more alcohol consumed, the greater the risk. Quite simply, if we drink and drive our ability to process information and make sound decisions becomes dangerously diminished. Similarly, when a driver is drowsy, decision making becomes sluggish and hampered.

### Would You Drive While Drowsy?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, “62% of all adults surveyed reported driving a vehicle during the prior year while feeling drowsy.” It is especially dangerous when sleep deprivation combines with the use of alcohol or medications.



### Case Study

The crash happened at 1:23 a.m. on an interstate highway. The driver lost control when he spun out on the wet roadway. A tractor-trailer plowed into him. He died from massive head injuries as he was ejected from the vehicle. Although he had a suspended license from previous speeding and DWI convictions, this was his first crash! **Factors:** night, rain, speed, alcohol, drowsy, size of truck, no safety belts, no skid control, vision error, he always felt he was a good driver.

### Causes of Drowsy Driving

Every person needs a certain amount of sleep to operate efficiently—most need 7 or 8 hours. Research indicates teenagers need over 9 hours. If you go to bed later than usual, and get up early, there becomes a sleep debt. The only way to pay the debt is by sleeping. A person can feel alert in the evening, but as the temporary alertness wears off, usually while driving home, drowsy driving occurs.

### How To Tell If You Are Sleepy

- Your eyes close by themselves.
- You begin moving your head rearward to better see.
- You can't stop yawning.
- You drift between lanes.
- You keep jerking the car back into the lane.
- You drift off the road.
- There is resistance to moving your eyes for mirror checks.

### Solutions to Drowsy Driving

Become aware of your personal biological clock. What times of day do you feel most drowsy? Almost everyone feels sleepy in the middle of the afternoon. When you are in a condition susceptible to drowsy driving, you must aggressively search intersections, check your rear zone frequently, and look for LOS-POT blockages. When your eyes resist the movements, find a safe place — perhaps a well lit parking lot at a fast food restaurant — to rest. Lock the doors. Close your eyes and relax for 15 minutes. If you fall asleep, that should tell you that sleep was needed. If this pattern occurs frequently, investigate the possibility that you have a sleep disorder.

### Use Key as a Cue to Fitness

When you put the key in your hand before you walk to the car, let it serve as a cue for you to take inventory of how fit you are to drive. Are you emotionally fit? Did you get a good night's sleep? Can you tell if you are tired?

#### Approaching the Car

Have your key in your hand with the tip of the key extending out between your index and your middle fingers. This could help avoid a car-jacking situation. You do not want to spend unnecessary time digging a key out of your purse or pocket.



#### Lock the Doors

Locking the doors gives you security from carjackers and better protection during a crash.

#### Butt-In Seating Position

Push your buttocks all the way back into the seat, then sit up straight. You will gain a firm support and relieve lower back stress.

#### Head Restraint at Ear Level

The closer your head is to the head restraint, the less movement and the better prevention of neck injuries during rear end crashes.

#### Keep Your Windows Up

If the driver's window is partially open, a side impact can send the driver's head crashing onto the window's edge, making it like a guillotine.

### Use Safety Belts

#### Fact 1. With safety belts on you will stay in the driving compartment.

You have a better chance of avoiding a crash if you can control the vehicle by staying behind the steering wheel.

#### Fact 2. With a safety belt on you stay in the vehicle.

A large percentage of occupants who are thrown out of vehicles are crushed by the vehicle falling on top of them after they are ejected.

#### Fact 3. With a safety belt on you slow your body down gradually.

When the body is abruptly stopped during a crash, traumatic injuries result as the brain crashes into the skull.

#### Fact 4. With a safety belt on you're not thrown into the crash.

The momentum of the crash will cause unrestrained occupants to fly into the crash.

#### Fact 5. Occupants with safety belts on will not crash into you.

If you take a sudden swerving or hard braking action, unbelted passengers can come crashing into you, causing bodily injury and loss of vehicle control.

#### Turn Headlights On

Headlights on during daytime conditions help other drivers detect your vehicle even when the driver is not actively and effectively searching for your car. The headlights can draw the drivers fringe vision to see you.

During bright sunlight conditions there are dark shadows that can easily make a car invisible. With your headlights on, drivers can best detect your car, and you will have fewer cars cutting you off unintentionally.