

# The Rules of the Road



Stop running the red lights



Use your GPS



Take regular Pit Stops



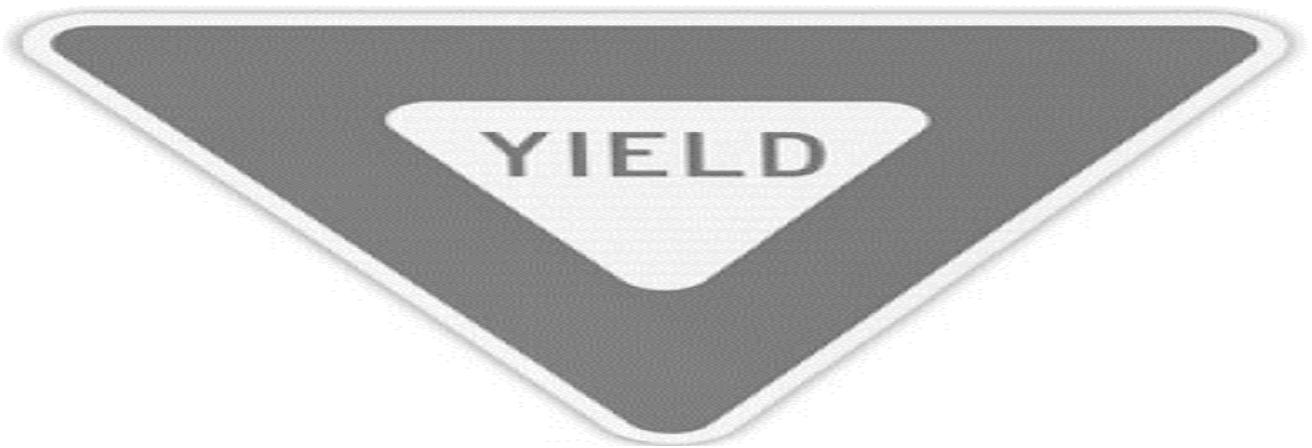
Joy rides are for fun!



Daily Travel Planner



Step on gas & release brakes



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**[www.DrivingLessonsForLife.com](http://www.DrivingLessonsForLife.com)**

## Bumps & Scratches, Fender Benders, and Accidents

**Bumps & Scratches:** Day to day “stuff,” events, happenings, “the daily grind.”

**Fender Benders:** Important issues such as money, parenting, household chores, communication, time, priorities, etc.

**Accidents:** Values, beliefs, dreams, feelings, passions, wishes, “stories,” etc.

*It's never about what it's about!*



*In marriage, you can either be right  
or you can be happy.*

*If you insist on being right, you will never be happy*

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## **Communication Road Map and Travel Guide**

-  Both: Identify who will be the speaker and who will be the listener
-  Speaker: Your job is to communicate thoughts, feelings, and experiences
-  Listener: Your job is to be “the journalist” and get the story
-  Speaker: Please use respectful “I statements” & avoid “you statements.”
-  Listener: Please rephrase, summarize, paraphrase, and repeat back
-  Speaker: Be prepared to clarify, pause for “captures,” and be patient
-  Listener: Please be sincere, try to get the content, and pace as needed

*The Lord gave us two ears and one mouth,  
so we will listen more!*

## **Key Navigation Points**

-  Understanding is the goal
-  The key to truly understanding is emotion
-  The Listener should be always trying to get the feeling/emotion
-  Be sincere! Imagine what you would feel! Empathy!
-  “So what you are feeling is...”
-  You do not have to get it perfect, just be sincere!

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### Getting Under the Hood



**Bad:** “What time is dinner going to be ready?”



**Okay:** “So what you said is...”



**Good:** “So what you said is \_\_\_\_\_ and you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_”



**Better:** “If I understand you correctly, you are trying to tell me \_\_\_\_\_ and I wonder if you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_?”



**Best:** “If I understand you correctly, you are trying to tell me \_\_\_\_\_ and I wonder if you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_? I also wonder if you have felt this feeling when I \_\_\_\_\_?”

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## Traffic Jams



Stop the cycle (“the crocodile death roll”).



Own your own behaviors, actions, words, tone of voice, etc.



Own your own feelings and emotions.



Own how what you did affected what happened and what your partner ultimately did.



Open up about what you REALLY wanted to say and what you REALLY felt. Be vulnerable.



Listen to what your partner has to say and what they said they felt. Be non-judgmental. Be a journalist.



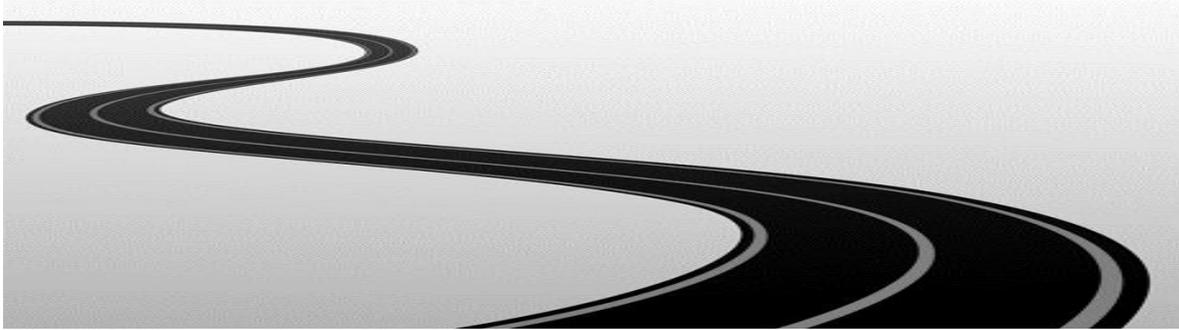
Agree together to stop the cycle in the future. It is the two of you against the cycle—US against IT.

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## Getting Back On the Road Again



- YOU: Describe the hurt feelings in a non-judgmental, non-blaming, way; Share limited examples of that pain. Explain what made you hurt and how it affected you.
- PARTNER: Try to “get it.” Stay emotionally present; resist the temptation to defend. Your role is to understand the impact of how your partner experienced this/these event(s).
- YOU: Own your own “You’re never going to hurt me anymore behaviors” and how they contribute to communications difficulties and the hurt.
- PARTNER: Own, apologize, be sincere and compassionate. Acknowledge the hurt and connect to the larger pattern.
- BOTH: Commit to each other to better understand these patterns and not repeat them.

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## Road Work

When: \_\_\_\_\_,

I don't feel safely connected to you.

In response, I tend to: \_\_\_\_\_,

I do this to try to: \_\_\_\_\_,

I do it, hoping that: \_\_\_\_\_,

As this pattern keeps going, I feel: \_\_\_\_\_,

What I then say to myself about our relationship is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When I move this way as part of our pattern/cycle/dance, you seem to:

\_\_\_\_\_

The more I: \_\_\_\_\_,

The more you seem to: \_\_\_\_\_,

We are then both trapped in pain, isolation, and disconnection. Maybe we can warn each other when this pattern/cycle/dance begins. We can call it:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Recognizing this pattern is the first step out of the disconnection we feel!**

\*Adapted from Sue Johnson, PhD, [Hold Me Tight](#)

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