

WHEELBINS

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City streets no place for morally sound travellers

The asphalt jungle. The hectic pace, the dog-eat-dog competitive spirit and the cutthroat attitude of the image-conscious people struggling for power in a superficial world. This is life in a world of greed and moral indifference. This is life in the fast lane.

No, I'm not talking about the corporate business world. I'm talking about city driving.

During my time as a Toronto motorist I have observed that city driving is radically different from country or small town driving. There is a unique set of rules for the city streets with a different code of etiquette, and rural folk like myself are still adjusting. Given the number of slow and defensive drivers, it's apparent that a lot of people don't know these city rules. The following guidelines and observations are for their benefit.

First, show the other drivers you care about them. Call out to them with

Means and Ends

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helpful driving hints and friendly advice. Suggest exciting new sexual options.

Next, drive as close as you can to the car in front of you. People in the city tend to be far too distant and we miss that sense of "closeness."

Share the music on your car stereo with others and play it loud enough for all to enjoy, especially late at night when everything is quiet and people can hear it properly.

If you find people driving too slowly on the highways, gently guide them in to the right hand lane where they belong. Slow drivers must realize they are a menace to the smooth flow of traffic.

Parking illegally is perfectly acceptable. It is not your fault that parking spots are so hard to find, especially free ones.

It's okay to turn left if the light has just turned red. Remember, oncoming motorists are obliged to wait for the intersection to clear before proceeding. Also, there is usually no need to signal a lane change; good drivers only change lanes when the other lane is clear.

When tailgating someone who's going too slow, you have several options within city driving etiquette. You may tap the brakes on and off, thereby slowing down, then speed up to almost merge the obtrusive vehicle. If the driver doesn't get the message, flash your high-beams through his rear window or lay on the horn to get his attention. Keep in mind that most city drivers are very considerate and will likely show their respect by calling out affection-

ately as they allow you to pass.

If you find someone driving twice the speed limit, be sympathetic. No doubt there's a very good reason. He's probably discovered there's no photo radar vehicle for kilometers. Besides, in this hectic world, it's necessary to rush just to get things done.

The general guideline for city driving etiquette is that you are in control and you have the right to choose your own speed and not be impeded. If the other motorists can't keep up with the flow of traffic and abide by the same rules of courtesy, they shouldn't be on the road.

It's unfortunate that the police are not more understanding. They contribute to bad people for speeding (when the drivers are not posing a hazard to anyone), illegal turns (which are usually executed with no problems), squealing (whose rubber is it anyway?), and not wearing a seatbelt (aren't there

enough restrictions?), just to name a few so-called violations.

Perhaps someday the police and all the inconsiderate defensive drivers will change their backward ways and come to appreciate the proper codes of conduct for city driving. After all, if it weren't for slow drivers, we'd all be able to get where we wanted to go a lot quicker.

I don't hold much hope of converting everyone. There will always be stubborn, old-fashioned and narrow-minded people who will insist on defensive driving, but I can only hope that with continued awareness, we can develop a responsible approach to driving that we can all be proud of.

And if you don't like it, stay off the road!

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