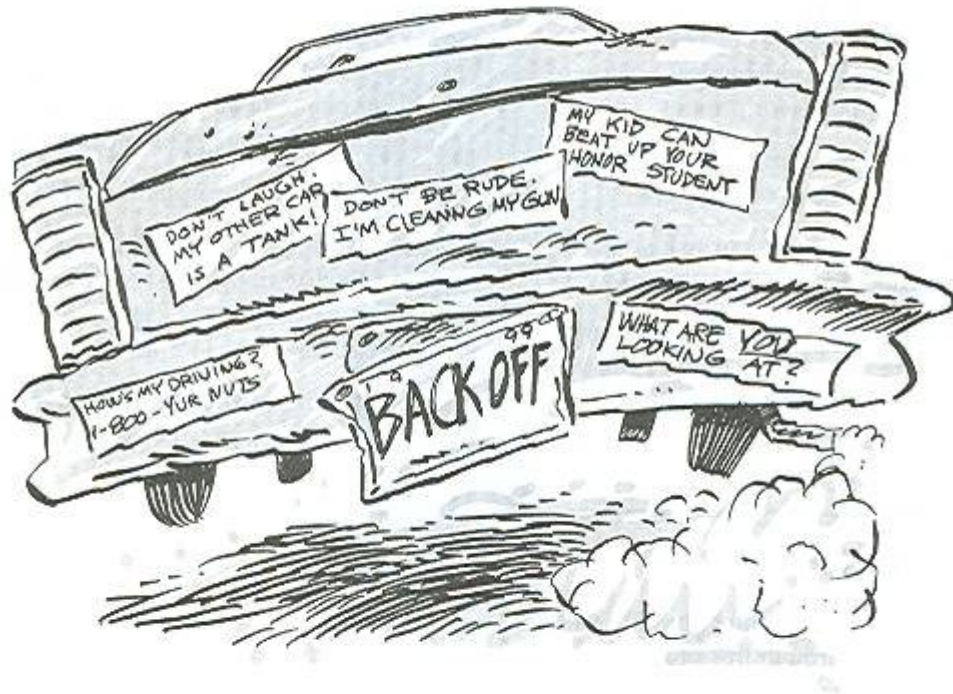


## Rudes of the Road

*Larry is as macho as the next guy. He played all the sports, had a couple of rousing fistfights in his youth, and hunts and fishes on the weekends. So, when Mr. Inconsiderate rudely cut off Mr. Macho on the interstate, Larry flashed an obvious signal of disapproval. A mile or so later, he and Mr. I. sat side by side at a stoplight. Larry glanced over and saw that he was staring into the barrel of a huge handgun. He froze in fear. The driver looked at him stonily, shook his head, then lowered the pistol and drove off. As you might imagine, Larry has since become much more tolerant behind the wheel.*



The highways have always been dangerous, but increasingly, people are using their vehicles as weapons, or worse, using actual weapons to prove a point about their driving.

**A recent six-year study by the American Automobile Association found more than 10,000 violent road clashes that resulted in 218 deaths and 12,000 injuries.**

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## Hey! Who You Calling Aggressive?!

Aggressive drivers are more likely to speed, tailgate, fail to yield, weave in and out of traffic, pass on the right, make improper lane changes, run stop signs and lights, make hand and facial gestures, scream, honk, and flash their lights. To coexist with aggressive drivers:

- ◆ Be patient and flexible. Practice cooperative driving behavior.
- ◆ Don't be goaded into confrontation.
- ◆ Don't take other drivers' behavior personally.
- ◆ Do not respond by blaring your horn, following too closely, cutting people off, or tapping your brakes.
- ◆ Give other drivers plenty of space, especially those behaving competitively or aggressively.
- ◆ If you make a driving error that upsets another driver, try to signal an apology with a smile and a wave of your hand.
- ◆ Drive in the right or center lanes unless passing. If you're in the left lane, even driving the speed limit, and someone wants to pass you, let him. It's common courtesy to move over if you can.
- ◆ Use turn signals when changing lanes or turning.
- ◆ Use your horn very sparingly.
- ◆ Dim your high beams as you approach another vehicle.
- ◆ When you merge, make sure you have plenty of room.
- ◆ If someone cuts you off, slow down and give him room to merge into your lane.
- ◆ Don't tailgate. Allow at least a three-second space between your car and the one ahead.
- ◆ If you feel you're being followed too closely, signal and pull over, or slow down slightly without braking, to allow the other driver to go by.

- ◆ Few things make another driver angrier than an obscene gesture. (If you don't believe us, ask Larry.) Keep your hands on the wheel. Don't even shake your head in disgust.
- ◆ Avoid eye contact. Looking or staring at another driver can turn an impersonal encounter between two strangers into a personal duel.
- ◆ Open doors carefully in parking lots.
- ◆ If a situation is getting out of hand, use your cell phone to call for help, or drive to a place where people are around, such as a police station or convenience store. Use your horn to attract attention. Do not get out of your car. And definitely *do not go home* if the other driver is in sight.

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## To Calm the Beast in You

- ◆ Adjust your attitude. Strive to be the most courteous person on the road; others might follow your lead.
- ◆ Forget winning. Driving is not a contest.
- ◆ If you feel like you're losing control, refocus your thoughts and take deep breaths. Think of a pleasant situation or memory.
- ◆ Relieve stress by allowing plenty of time to reach your destination.
- ◆ Listen to soothing music or a book on tape.
- ◆ Consider that you might know the other driver, or that he or she might have a reason for driving erratically.
- ◆ If you think you have a problem with anger management, seek professional help.