

Homer-work instructions:

DO NOT print out, or even admit you ever saw the next two pages. ☺

In the upper right hand corner of each page, (where this page says "An overview"), you will find the category in which that particular exercise falls.

Each of these exercises falls in to one of 4 categories, and they're intermingled:

1- Preparational Exercises: Things you can do with your student that prepare you for something, but that don't require them to operate the vehicle.

2- Observational Exercises: Things you can do with your student to help them make movies in their head, and condition themselves for what to expect from other drivers or vehicles while they're driving.

3- In-car, behind the wheel skill development exercises. Self explanatory. Also, you will find these presented sequentially:

- a)- Things to do before operating the vehicle
- b)- Things to practice in a controlled environment (parking lot)
- c)- Things you will demonstrate prior to them practicing
- d)- Things they can supervise them practicing

4- Some final "Hot-Tips" from your Uncle Homer.

As usual, we ALWAYS welcome your thoughts on other things that should be included in "Homer-work" that you don't get in driver's ed. So don't hesitate to drop us your ideas ... that's how we get better and better.

Thanks again for your support of the **Accident Avoidance Workshops!**

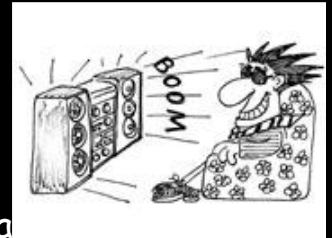
driver trainin' the way it ought'a be!

"Homer-work" for parents: "TUNE-OUT!"

We use sight the senses of sight and sound to drive. If you eliminate one (sound) SIMPLE math tells us it increases the likelihood of being in a crash.

So, no tunes ... period. And neither should you when they're riding with you. Lead by example, folks. Here's the fix:

- 1- Open your Owner's Manual,
- 2- Locate the fuse block,
- 3- Determine which fuse goes to the radio,
- 4- Remove the temptation.



If they figure out how to change the fuse, then remove the radio. A responsible parent on the planet has the rule: "No music while you're learning how to drive", but don't be so naive, just as we did when we were their age, as soon as they get around the corner, it's going on, and it's going on LOUD. Sure, they'll tell you they'll keep the volume down, but don't be offended ... EVERY kid thinks their parent is stupid enough to believe that when they're at that age.

You can't blame them for loving music at their age, because remember back in the day? Led Zepplin, Rolling Stones, Def Leppard, The Who, Lawrence Welk, ☺ etc. etc. etc. And the louder it was ... the better it was. Music is an important social tool when we're that age ... it helps us determine which people have our similar tastes and who our friends are.

The pre-frontal cortex, as you remember, doesn't develop until age 25, and it doesn't matter how "special" or "different" you think your kid is ... their biology is the same as everyone else's. That's the part of the brain that considers consequences for actions, curbs self-destructive decisions, executive decision making and planning ahead. They ARE NOT CAPABLE of this discipline, so DO NOT bet their lives on that discipline. Just remove the temptation. And don't forget what you learned about wearing devices in your ears while driving.

You would be disappointed to hear how many times a year traffic slows down in front of a teen for some reason they don't understand, ... so they pull out to pass and get slaughtered by a 40,000 pound fire truck that everyone ELSE could hear. This is a STUPID reason to never see your child again.

YOU KNOW what the right decision is. Do you have the character to act on it?

"Homer-work" for parents: "The first citation"

A few suggestions from some parents on how to handle your student's first moving violation.

My Dad's rule: First preventable moving violation such as speeding: Loss of license until 18. Now make sure they know it up-front, it's not fair to drop it on them after the fact. (Very effective. At over 50 years old, I have yet to receive a speeding ticket!)

From Matt Compo: For those of you who put your student as a "rider" on your insurance, be sure your student understands that if they get a moving violation, you will insist they purchase their own insurance from that point forward.

From Patti Cain: HAVE THEM call the insurance company and find out what it would cost them ... by themselves ... with a moving violation on their record. That will definitely slap them back to reality, and all of a sudden, the speed limit won't look "too slow" anymore!

"Homer-work" #1: "The first crash, part 1"

Ah ... your first crash. If you're like me, you can't believe it happened ... you want to go back and do it over differently ... and so much for that perfect driving record you hoped for. But right now, you're the **ONLY ONE** who cares about being in a crash, or the car. Everyone else on the planet just wants to know you're ok ... especially your parents.

These pages are designed to do one thing ... make it easier on you when you're involved in a crash. This page walks you through what you should do, and the next page should also be prepared and carried with you to streamline how you handle the logistics. But trust me, your head, your emotions and your memory are going to be **TOO MESSED UP** to rely on when it happens, so you should have these with you so you don't forget something.

- 1- First of all, thank God you're still here, and say a prayer for the others.
- 2- Make sure everyone's immediate health is tended to. (Nobody is trapped in a burning car, bleeding to death, or about to get hit or run over, etc.)
- 3- Screen-shot your phone, to document the time of the crash.
- 4- If the other driver is a flight risk, photograph them and their tag, **RIGHT NOW!**
- 5- Do not discuss blame. Understand that just like in the last exercise of the Workshops, once it's over, regardless of fault, **YOU** will already know **EVERYTHING** you wished you had done differently to prevent that crash, ... even to the point of feeling guilty. But there are always things the other driver could have done too. Therefore, there is no need to admit, or point blame at this point. The only one interested in blame is the insurance company. Let them figure it out.
- 6- Call 911
- 7- Call your ICE contact
- 8- Exchange information using the following page to help. (Be sure the name on the insurance card matches license, or get an explanation.)
- 9- Photograph the following:
 - Their license plate number and tag number
 - Their driver's license and insurance card
 - Damage to cars
 - Weather
 - Pavement, and any marks on the pavementAlso take a short video of the other driver moving around in case they try to claim injury after the fact.
- 10- If the vehicle is towed, get a copy of that documentation from the officer.

Nationally, everyone will be involved in a crash every 15-1/2 years. Teenagers 10 times as often. You can't fool the math. I've been in several crashes, every one of them attributable to "driver error" on my part. I'm still an ok guy ... and so are you! Being in crash is humbling ... and it's ok to be humbled now and then. It makes you a better driver, and a better person.

Now ... be prepared. The surreal-ness of this will cause you to feel more vulnerable than you ever have before. You'll wonder how you ever made it anywhere without crashing before. You **WILL** be afraid to drive again. Get back on the horse. Neighborhoods first ... and someone with you if you want ... even slowly if you must. But ride again soon, or this can become much worse than it already is.

"Homer-work" #1: "The first crash, part 2"

People to call:

I.C.E. contact: _____ Phone #: (____) _____ - _____
Other contact: _____ Phone #: (____) _____ - _____
Taxi Cab service: _____ Phone #: (____) _____ - _____
Wrecker service: _____ Phone #: (____) _____ - _____
Doctor's name: _____ Phone #: (____) _____ - _____
Special medical conditions / notes: _____

Fill two out, and leave two blank for to gather the other driver(s) information:

Name: _____ D.L.# _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____
Insurance company: _____ Policy#: _____

Name: _____ D.L.# _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____
Insurance company: _____ Policy#: _____

Name: _____ D.L.# _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____
Insurance company: _____ Policy#: _____

Name: _____ D.L.# _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____
Insurance company: _____ Policy#: _____

"Homer-work" #2 "Pull it over!"

So that sick feeling runs through your heart as you glance to see flashing lights in your side view mirror. You wonder if, and hope they are after someone else, but then it appears obvious they're glued to your path, and nobody else's. What do you do?



- 1~ Acknowledge the officer the instant you see he's trying to pull you over. Wave at him, turn on your 4-way flashers, or even point to where you'd like to pull over in the best interest of both of your safety. Officers will be very patient with you in allowing you to take a minute to get somewhere that will not congest traffic, or pose a safety hazard to either of you.
- 2~ If it's night time, turn your dome light on immediately so the officer can see everything inside your car.
- 3~ Understand they may choose to come up on the passenger-side of your vehicle if you pull over on a busy roadway.
- 4~ If you have electric windows, roll ALL of your windows down as there's no telling from which direction they will approach your vehicle. If you do not have electric windows, roll only the driver's door window down, and do it before the officer gets out of their car.
- 5~ Be the first one to speak. Great them pleasantly, and with a smile. **THEY ARE LOOKING harder for a reason to be a nice guy ... than they are looking for a reason to be a jerk. GIVE THEM A REASON** to like you, and it will go a long way with them. Your attitude can decide whether your pull-over goes like the photo on the left, or the one on the right!



"Homer-work" #2 "Pull it over!" (cont.)

6~ Fess up. If you were going too fast, BE REMORSEFUL ... tell them you're sorry and explain you had no reason to be going too fast, and need to be more careful with that. When an officer pulls you over, they have one objective ... and that is to change a behavior. If you can show them that you already have every intention of changing that behavior, ... then their job is done! But if you dig in your heels and try to talk your way out of it, I have heard some officers say: "Well, I see it one way ... and you see it another. So perhaps we should find an independent third party to make a ruling.



- 7~ No chit chat. You say: "Yes sir." "No sir." "No excuse sir." and "I'm really sorry. Got anything else to say ... save it for the judge. If you do choose to contest the officer's claim in court, then the less fuss you make about it here, the less likely he will remember you negatively in court, and therefore, the MORE likely it will go in your favor.
- 8~ For parents: I strongly recommend your student goes to court for their first offense. This will let them make a movie in their head, when in all reality, it's probably not a major offense anyway. I have known some students to stand in front of a Judge and say: "I do plead guilty, and completely understand the violation and have no excuse for my behavior. I just wanted to offer my apologies in person to the State, and at the same time, gain a better understanding of how our judicial system operates." ... only to get a big grin of appreciation from the Judge, and be let off scott-free. But DO NOT go in to a court room thinking you're going to have a well-thought-out excuse they haven't heard before ... you'll just embarrass yourself.

"Homer-work" #3: "The first citation"

A few suggestions for the students on how to handle being pulled over:

- 1- When you notice you're about to get pulled over, acknowledge the police officer with a wave, or even a point to the parking lot where you want to stop.
- 2- If there's any doubt in your mind that it's a real police officer,
 - a.) Have them follow you to a highly-populated area and stop there.
 - b.) Once you stop, dial 911.
 - c.) Give the operator your name, tell them where you are, and explain that you're not sure if this is a real police officer.
(The dispatcher will be able to confirm/disprove this right away because if it IS a real officer, they have already called in your license plate, so the operator will have already heard your name once in the last 5 minutes. And if it's NOT a real police officer, she will send you a BUNCH of real ones!)
- 3- If it's night-time, turn your dome light on so the officer can see everything and everyone in the car. (Trust me, you WANT this guy to like you right now!)
- 4- When you stop, put it in park, roll your front windows down, and DO NOT reach for anything ... period.
- 5- This is no time to be cool, or even think about taking the upper hand. You let the officer control the situation. This is one of very few people on the planet who would take a bullet for you. RESPECT THAT. Look him in the eye, be pleasant, cooperate, and if you messed up, show remorse and apologize.

The officer has one objective here, and that is to change a behavior. If you demonstrate that you have already made that change, his job is done. But if you see it one way, and he sees it another way ... then you can expect a third party to be called in to decide who is right, and you will call them "Your Honor".

Sample



"Homer-work" #4: "Stuck in the Middle With You"

I'm sure it's no surprise to you that hugging the right side of the road, dropping two wheels off the shoulder, overcorrecting in to oncoming traffic became the #1 killer of our teens shortly after they started producing cars without hood ornaments. When the parents were younger, those hood ornaments served almost as a "gun-sight" in helping us figure out where the center of the lane was.

Another tip to help your student keep the car in the middle of the road. All you need is a small piece of electrical tape.

1- Go find an abandoned road with no traffic, and park the car in the middle of the road.

2- Have the student sit normally positioned behind the wheel of the car, and point to the center of the road.

3- Place a small piece of electrical tape on the windshield directly where they are pointing. This tape can then be used as an imaginary hood-ornament, useful to help them locate where the center of the road is supposed to be.

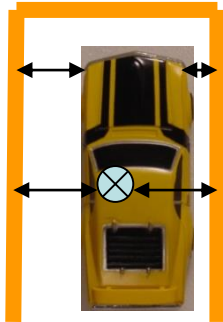


"Homer-work" #5: "Lane Positioning"

In an empty parking lot, with your coach seated beside you, pretend the lined-up parking spaces represent a lane of traffic.

Drive straight down the lane and park in the very last spot.

Get out of the car and MEASURE how far it is to the line on your left, and the line on your right:

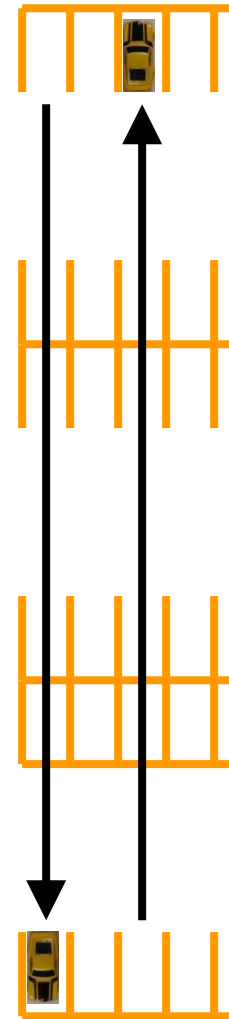


The distances *should* be equal.

If they are not, THINK about the adjustment you want to make and then repeat the exercise going back the other way as shown.

Goal: You should be able to do this until you can make BOTH measurements within $\frac{1}{2}$ " of each other 3 times in a row.

(Hint: For extra credit, try it in reverse!)



"Homer-work" #6: "Dropping 2 Wheels"

Find a straight, deserted road somewhere with smooth, flat shoulders and be sure there is no debris along side the road that you may hit.

Drive along at 15 mph, with a coach seated next to you, DELIBERATELY drop 2 wheels off of the side of the road. Then, let off of the accelerator and only gently apply the brakes.

Continuing to decelerate, once you're comfortable you are back in control, gently pull over and stop the car on the shoulder. Then re-enter traffic when it is safe to do so.

Turn the car around and do it again going the other direction. Do this not just until you're comfortable with it, but until it's BORING!

Once you've mastered 15 mph, repeat it, increasing the speed in 5 mph increments. Each time, repeating until it's boring.

You don't need to do this at any speed over 30 ... it's not the speed of the car that matters, it's what's going on in your HEAD that matters.

By the time you have mastered it at 30 mph, then the next time you drop a wheel off the side of the road, (and it WILL happen), you will not over-react because you have seen it done so many times before!

When that happens, give yourself a silly grin and then call me and tell me you're ok! ☺



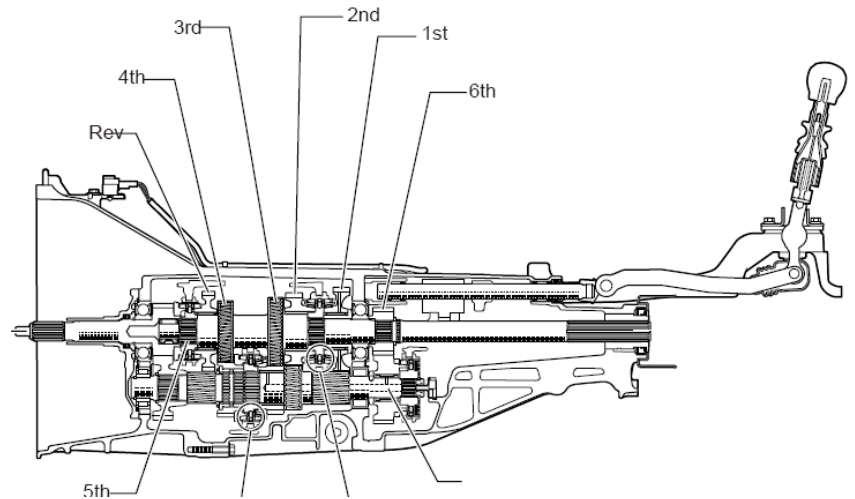
"Homer-work" #7: "A shifty subject... "

"The shortest Homework of all ... probably requiring no action at all at this point.

EVERYONE needs to know how to drive a vehicle equipped with a manual transmission, or a "stick shift" or as the old-timers call them "standard" transmission. Suppose you're in a position where you need to get someone somewhere quickly, and the only vehicle available has a manual transmission ... you'r stuck because you're under-trained.

But ... DO NOT attempt it until you've spent 2-3 years driving an automatic. You need to be focusing on what's going on OUTSIDE your car right now ... THAT is where the trouble is. Get out there and make movies in your head until the cows come home ... and then make more.

But CERTAINLY don't put yourself in the situation where you're trying to think about pushing in the clutch to go for the next gear, what the shift pattern is, and when to let the clutch out when all of a sudden ... everything goes horribly wrong in front of you. That is TOO MUCH to process for someone with no movies.



"Homer-work" #8: "You'll get a charge out of this one..."

"If people would just take it on themselves to replace the battery in their car every 3 years, I'd never sell another starter or alternator." -Major parts retailer

And here's a rare personal endorsements from me ... I don't use anything BUT Interstate Batteries. My Silverado, race trailer, golf cart, Trailblazer, motorcycle, radar guns, radar screens, the battery I use to jump-start those who need it in class, the radios you guys listened to in class, even my phone ... all powered by Interstate Batteries.

And another hot tip from your Uncle Homer is this:

Put a smudge of Vaseline next to each pole on the battery, and stick a penny in it. It will help reduce battery terminal corrosion, which can be a problem!

Take the time to find your local Interstate Battery dealer, and drop in to make an introduction.

You're going to buy a LOT more batteries than you think before you're done driving. It pays to have a reliable source.



"Homer-work" #9: "Floor obstructions"

Yes. Floor mats can cause you to crash.

If a floor mat "walks" up behind the brake pedal it can prevent you from being able to achieve maximum braking. Or, in some cases, the floor mat will wind up ON TOP OF the accelerator pedal which is even worse.

Rules on floor mats are very simple.

- 1- If you don't use floor mats, be sure the carpet is not worn or torn in any area that may trip up your feet.
- 2- If you use floor mats, be sure they are for YOUR VEHICLE ... not some generic mat that may or may not fit. One line to consider is a company called "WeatherTech". (See below)
- 3- If they are not form-fitted, be sure they are secured in place.

And while you're at it, be sure the area under the driver's seat is free of anything that could come forward under emergency braking and wind up lodged behind the brake pedal.



"Homer-work" #10: "If you're going to drive a car BY YOURSELF ..."

... then you need to be able to change a tire BY YOURSELF! -Jack Stillwell

Ideally, have a friend stand watch, but NEVER turn your back on on-coming traffic, and leave yourself a way to escape if danger approaches. Even if it takes you longer, that's ok.

1- Put your 4-way flashers on, apply the emergency brake, put the car in park, or in gear if it's a manual transmission, and put out your triangles.



2- Before jacking the car up, loosen the lug nuts. For those who have a hard time with this, carry a steel tube in your truck to use as an extension on the lug wrench for additional leverage.



3- Chock the tires with something to keep the car from rolling.



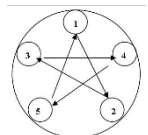
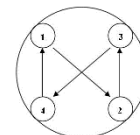
4- Use a jack, or have your bionic friend lift the car up.



5- Change the tire



6- Tighten the lug nuts in the sequence shown here.



7- Drive to the nearest service center and have your tire repaired or replaced, but at least have the lug nuts torqued to the proper torque level by a professional:



"Homer-work" #11: "Do you see what I see?"

So, you're changing lanes to your left after checking your mirrors and suddenly, CRASH! ... and that's the way you find out that someone walked by your mirror in a parking lot and knocked it out of adjustment. So when you THOUGHT you were looking at the lane next to you, it was actually the NEXT lane that you saw in your mirror.

That's why you need to adjust your side mirrors so that if you sit normally and only move your eyes, you cannot see the side of your car ... but if you turn your HEAD to use the mirror, you CAN see the side of your car. That way, you have a point of reference.



Blind spot mirrors can also help. They are to be placed on the outside, bottom corner of your side view mirror. This will reveal more of your blind spot than if they were placed on an inside corner.

MANY drivers will obviously drive in your blind spot for miles on end having no idea you can't see them because they were not raised to think about the other guy, or to consider what their position is.

"Wink" mirrors (below), can also help improve visibility.



"Homer-work" #12: "Awareness awareness"



As a passenger in someone else's car, find someone who is trying to divide their attention between driving and using their cell phone and observe them closely. Clearly someone not raised with the self-control or discipline necessary to understand the needs of others to be safe exceeds their selfish need for the instant gratification they get from their self-important need for validation.

We know we are supposed to check our mirrors every 4 seconds to be aware of our surroundings. So, use the stopwatch feature on your phone to time how long it is between how often they check their mirrors just to be aware of their surroundings. (Checking the mirrors to make a lane change does not count.)

You need to be aware of the fact that cell-phone drivers have NO IDEA of what's around them at any point in time because they are focusing on only 2 things: The distance they maintain behind the vehicle in front of them, and being prepared to stop if the brake lights in front of them come on.

These are the people who, when everything goes wrong, will swerve in to you and then say "I had no idea you were there!" because it's true ... they TRULY have no clue. They were thinking only of themselves ... not of you.

"Homer-work" #13: "Control familiarization"

Know how to operate the following controls without looking:

- ~ Headlights
- ~ Wipers (front and rear) and sprayers
- ~ 4 way flashers
- ~ Heater / Air Conditioning / Defroster
- ~ Windows
- ~ Cruise Control
- ~ Horn
- ~ Door locks (quickly!) To escape from, or to secure themselves in the car

You also must know how to quickly turn off the radio in the event that you hear a siren. But it makes no sense to know how to adjust or operate the radio / cd player without looking because you won't be doing so while you're moving, RIGHT?



"Homer-work" #14: "That's the brakes"

From 15 miles per hour, try stopping the car as quickly as you can using only the emergency brake!

Different emergency braking systems will need to be handled differently. The only system you can use that can be applied in a semi-normal fashion is the one operated by hand and located between the seats.



The challenge is, applying the brakes as much as possible without making the rear wheels lock up and skid. Keep in mind, when the car begins to slow, the vehicle's weight shifts to the front, which makes the rear end much lighter. With a lighter rear end, there is less weight on the rear tires. With less weight on the rear tires, it will be much easier to make the tires skid ... and it's a vicious circle.

Measure how long it takes you to stop from 20 mph using normal brakes, and then using just the emergency brake **WITHOUT** allowing the tires to skid!

And now that they know how to **BRAKE** the car without using power brakes, do this one for extra credit: From 10 mph increasing up to 25, shut the car off in a safe place and have them see what it's like to have to brake and steer a car without power brake or power steering assist. It can be a real eye-opener.

"Homer-work" #15: "Escape"

Set up 4 cones or milk jugs $\frac{1}{2}$ full of water so they are 7' wide (as shown).

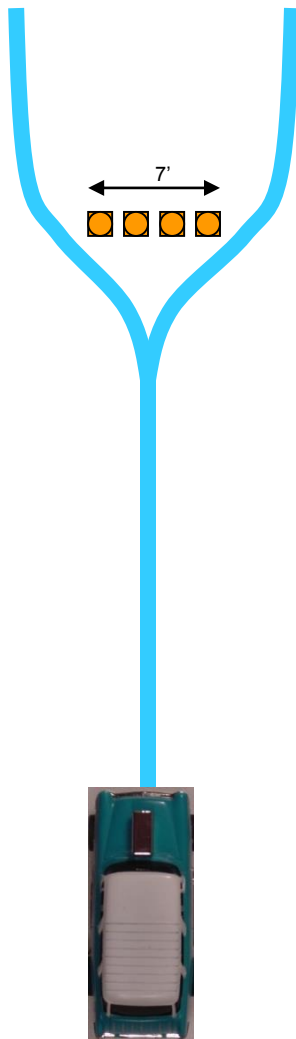
Drive directly at them at 20 mph.

Just before you get to them, your instructor should say "left" or "right" indicating on which side of the barrier you are to escape.

The appropriate response for the driver would be for them to apply maximum braking while looking NOT to the far left or right, but to the space directly along side of the cones (car) in front of them.

Since our eyes directly effect our hands, this will help them navigate their vehicle as if they were pulling up along side of a car they would have otherwise rear-ended.

(Coach can vary the signal point to increase/decrease the level of difficulty.)



"Homer-work" #16: "Directional target practice"

This is my favorite one!

Fill a bunch of plastic or paper cups $\frac{1}{2}$ full of water (so they don't blow around) and place them randomly around an empty parking lot.

Earn cash from your parents each time you successfully run over a cup with the front tire your parent specifies. The payment schedule is as follows:

5 cents for driving over a cup with the front wheel.

10 cents for driving over a cup with the back wheel.

15 cents for BACKING over a cup with the front wheel.

20 cents for BACKING over a cup with the rear wheel.

50 cents for BACKING over a cup with:

the left front while turning left, or

the right front while turning right*

*The difficulty is enhanced because the cup approaches the tire from BENEATH the car!



Rules:

All money earned is to be put towards a celebration dinner for the two of you at a restaurant of the DRIVER'S choice.

Do not use styrofoam cups.

Don't leave any trash on the parking lot. ☺

"Homer-work" #17: "Buying a car" 1 of 3

Before you make a buying decision, think long and hard, and as my Dad always said:

"Do your homework!"

Before we get in to the "Mechanical" portion of the vehicle selection process, you need to do your homework on the NON-mechanical part of this process!

We discussed how everyone takes driving personally, and therefore, everyone thinks they're a good driver ... remember? We also know a dog owner selects a dog that reflects their personality as well (and sometimes their looks!)

Cars are no different...

- ~ Conservative personalities drive conservative passenger cars,
- ~ Family-minded personalities drive mini-vans and SUVs,
- ~ Economic personalities drive economic vehicles,
- ~ Pretentious, self-important personalities drive expensive, pretentious brands,
- ~ Macho personalities drive lifted pick-ups,
- ~ Little-old-lady personalities drive little-old-lady vehicles,
- ~ Speed-hungry personalities drive high-horse-powered vehicles,
- ~ Attention-hungry personalities drive attention-getting vehicles,
- ~ Lowered cars are driven by image-hungry personalities with no regard for safe handling.
- ~ Smart cars are driven by fad-hungry personalities with no regard for crumple-zone safety or roll-over risk.

The most popular case in point: The only reason anyone ever buys a Jeep is because they want to be known for driving a Jeep ... that's it. If you have every driven ANYTHING ELSE, then the minute you get in to a Wrangler, you realize you don't buy it for good handling, good visibility, comfortable ride, low roll-over risk, practicality, ample trunk space, high safety rating or any other reason most people purchase a vehicle ... it's image, and image only. It's the Harley Davidson of automobiles.

So be sure to know two things here:

#1: People WILL JUDGE you buy your vehicle selection, fair or not. YOU WILL be profiled by not just the police, but by everyone with respect to your decision here.

#2: YOU NEED TO LEARN TO JUDGE others by their choices as well. You remember from class: "You can tell the bad-decision makers if you know the signs", right? "Profiling" is a good thing here, because it can make your driving environment safer, even save your life. The decisions you're able to make based on what you see can be used to your advantage, which can help you proactively avoid dangerous situations. One example, aggressive cars carry aggressive personalities. Once you can identify bad decision-makers just by looking at them, you become more competent in AVOIDING dangerous situations ... and crashes. Work hard to DEVELOP that skill!

"Homer-work" #17: "Buying a car" 2 of 3

Let's start with some tough love. In fact, let's dedicate this entire page to the most important factor in your student having a vehicle ... as I learned from my Dad:

Principle #1: The student pays for half. You need to shelve this whole "I want my kid to have everything I don't have" and the whole "Entitled" philosophy, which is just a fancy word for the kids formerly known as "spoiled rotten brats". All of these commercials showing a smiling Daddy giving his cute little hair-ribboned girl the keys to a cute little VW Bug, Fiat, Mini-Cooper or whatever just makes me sick. There's SO MANY things wrong with that picture, not the least of which is the fact society in general feels all warm and fuzzy when they see it, otherwise the ad company wouldn't be doing it. Entitlement is not a desirable character trait in today's society. All of the "Awards" and "AP classes" and "Honors this" and "Honors that" aren't even terms on the playing field of real life ... but learning the value of hard-work, having a respect for money and establishing relationships has sadly been left off of the "parenting palette" for some reason. Put it back on. The fact that in 2017, 97% of the kids were given cars newer than the one I can afford to drive is sad. And if you don't employ that rule out of a simple desire for your student to begin building a value-system, then please do so out of the desire to keep your kid safer, because research has proven those who have skin in the game, crash their cars SIGNIFICANTLY less frequently.

If you follow Principle 1, then Principle 2 will be moot. But if your kid is better than everyone else, and they are entitled, then we need to go to the next Principle:

Principle #2: Fact: Less than 3% of the parents who have attended the Workshops are crash-free. You can bet that's a sample representation of society. So yes ... you can expect your kids to crash as well. And you can expect them to be 10 times as likely to do so during their first year, as we documented in class. Therefore ... their first car needs to be expendable ... plan on it.

But again, as I said, if you follow Principle 1, then Principle 2 will be moot if you think about it. Simply because if the student is required to pay their fair share in the purchase of the vehicle, there is no way they'll be considering a high-price vehicle.

Sidenote: You have access to the KBB.com where you researched your vehicle specifications for class. That site can also be helpful in determining an acceptable price for the vehicle as well. The one thing they don't tell you, is that a vehicle owned by a smoker is considered in "poor" condition, and can price out 40% less than one that is smoke-free.

"Homer-work" #17: "Buying a car" 3 of 3

- 1- "Safety ratings", and "How many stars" ranks a vehicle can be largely subjective, especially when ranked on a scale the grader create themselves. But you can't fool physics. They're factual. Save a blank copy of the Vehicle Specifications Sheet you filled out prior to the classroom in your insurance papers file, and when comparing cars, use it to check against these parameters first :
 - ~ Height/Wheelbase ratio less than .652.
 - ~ Power/Weight Ratio less than .073.
 - ~ Nothing under 2600 pounds ... the more protection, the better.
 - ~ Turning radius: Less than 37' is great, over 40' not so much.
- 2- NOW go to Consumer Reports' website and do research on the vehicle's safety.
- 3- Test-drive it, being sure to do EVERYTHING you did in the Workshops.
(Hot tip: It's more fun with the salesman in the car with you!) ☺
- 4- If it has any features you DO NOT want, (conventional brakes, automatic braking, lane assist, whatever...), be sure they can be remedied, or keep looking.
- 5- Do your typical checks: CarFax history report, confirm no flood damage, make sure it doesn't leak anything, check tire condition, paint condition, glass condition, check every switch, light, belt, etc. etc. etc.
- 6- When you narrow it down to a few vehicles, call me at the phone number you put in your phone, and I will be glad to tell you how the vehicles do in the Workshops! That's something Consumer Reports CANNOT tell you!

"Homer-work" #18: "Find your love"

You spend the first part of your adult life trying to figure out what you want to do for a living FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!!! It's all crap. Yes, it used to be that way, and that's probably how your parents remember it. It wasn't unusual for someone to spend 30 years with one company and retire with a pension. Sadly, those days are gone. Today, if you spend more than 5 years with company, you're considered stagnant.

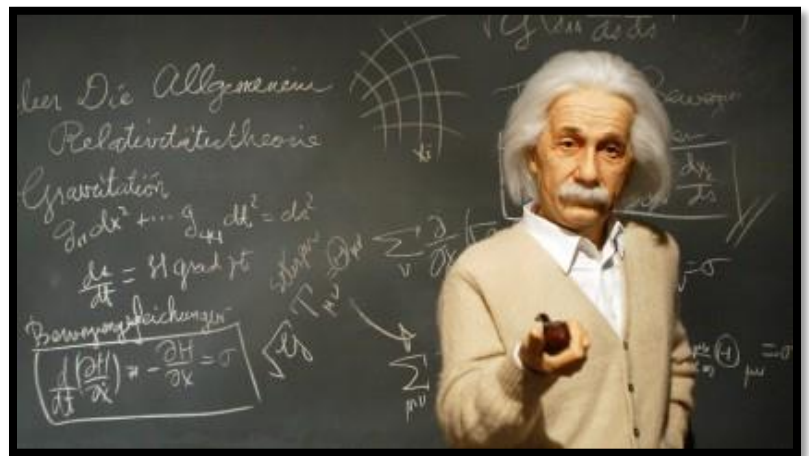
Shake their hands, squeeze their hands, and look them in the eye. Have a good work ethic. Just because you work in a store and there are no customers to wait on doesn't give you the right to sit there and play on your phone without expecting immediate termination if you're caught ... that's considered theft ... you're paid to act in the best interest of the company ... not yourself. You take the money and don't deliver ... that's theft.

And yes, you will take aptitude tests, take career counseling, and get ALL KINDS of opinions from ALL KINDS of people as to what you should become. Thank them all, and then look within yourselves because THERE is where the answer is.

One of the biggest things I learned from my last employer was to never ever work for anyone you wouldn't hire to work for you. If you don't respect the people you work for, it's just not possible to achieve the level of commitment from yourself to perform at a level worthy of growth and recognition. So you're not driven, your performance lacks, your evaluations are poor, you lose the job, and you'll wind up thinking you're not a good worker.



Compounding on this very point, let me tell you this. I truly believe you should put more faith in what you think you should be that what others do and let me tell you why. Several years ago, Kennesaw State University's Math Education Department escorted me out of a school where I was doing my student teaching to become a High School Math Teacher. They threw me out of their education program telling me I had "none of the abilities necessary to be an effective teacher". I hope after seeing what I do for others in an empty parking lot, you feel differently. Had I trusted the math education department for my career direction, I never would have even had the opportunity to do what I do now, and would never have achieved the level of happiness, fulfillment and contentment that I have today.



It's true ... you have to find something you love to do, and when you do, ... you'll never work another day in your life. I haven't worked since I started doing the Workshops.

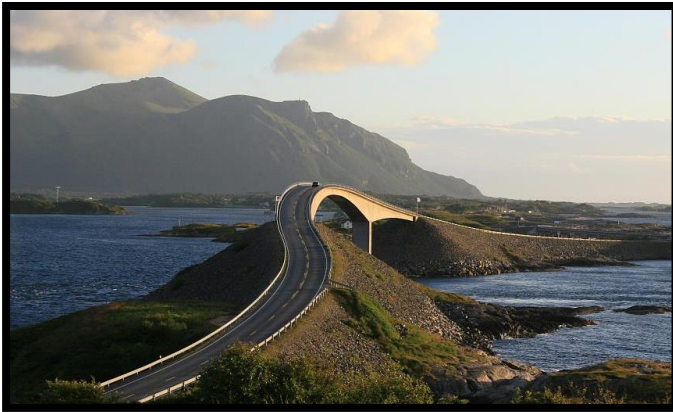
*"Homer-work" #19:
"Non-Electronic Relationships"*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hER0Qp6QJNU>

Enough said.

"Homer-work" #20: "Disconnect"

It's "all about the money" to the marketing gurus who want you to have the latest technological gadgets money can buy, and they couldn't care less how poor the quality of your life becomes as long as you're buying their products. So, let me show you how to live a better life.



You DO NOT have to be at the beck and call of any and everyone, any and every time they want to tell you about any and everything. Generations have survived more healthily than we do today before the advent of even ANSWERING MACHINES! You can too.



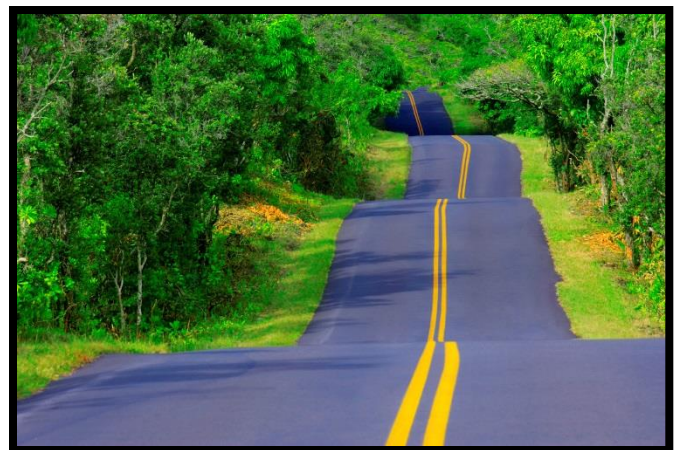
Yes ... you need to look out for #1 ... so be sure to take some time for that person. How? ... Simple. ... Disconnect. Shut it off. Unplug it. Let the battery go dead. Put your own sanity's needs ahead of everyone else's. Go camping. It's grounding.

"Homer-work" #20: "Disconnect" (cont.)

You can leave in plenty of time, plan your route and enjoy the drive ... or you can let your impatience turn it in to the most rage-inducing, red-light-running, heart-stopping-every-time-you-see-a-flashing-blue-light experience you've ever had to endure ... it's entirely up to you.



At some point in time, some folks mature to the point where they get tired of being a nervous wreck pushing the edge of 7-10 mph over the limit while they drive ... and they just decide to stop pushing the envelope. I hope that happens to you ... because it's liberating.



I truly hope you learn to take everything off your plate before you get behind the wheel ... there can be nothing more therapeutic than "windshield time" if you handle it properly. Long gone are the days of "going for a nice drive", unless you make the time, and set the stage to do so.

"Homer-work" #21: "Final thoughts"

This is the only multi-pager in the whole packet folks. Frankly, because it's worth it. (This is for the kids to read, but only if you approve of the message.)

I found out recently that one of my best friends through High School went back to prison for the 3rd time because of drugs. The sad part is, I REMEMBER the party we attended in 8th GRADE ... when a mutual "buddy" of ours came up to us with a joint in his hand and said "try this"! Now you already know enough about my Dad to know that if I had gone home stoned ... the man NEVER would have stopped slapping me! But my buddy ... not so much. So as I'm realizing this is EXACTLY the type of party my folks had warned me about, and trying to find an excuse to leave, I look over my shoulder on my way out the door and saw my friend take a hit off of the joint.

When we got back in school on Monday, I trashed him. I told him "What the hell were you thinking?", "Didn't your parents teach you anything?" and so on and so on. His reply? "Aw c'mon, everyone experiments with this stuff." In hindsight ... and on reflection ... I realize now, that was NOT experimentation. No, I saw him throw the first punch, in a fight, that would turn in to a battle, and end up in an ALL OUT WAR ... that he was destined to lose THREE TIMES OVER before he was 50, didn't I? I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING to go back and re-live that moment again, because I would have dragged his ass out the front door with me when I left that party.

Here's something that may surprise you, and anyone who knows me will tell you. I have never had a beer, wine, liquor. The closest I've every come to alcohol is fueling race cars with it! I've never smoked anything, or done any illegal drugs ... for cryin' out loud I've never even had a cup of coffee. I am about as square as they come.



But please understand, there's a very good reason for this. I learned early on, there's hardly anything you could serve me as a meal that I won't enjoy. I love ALL types of food. As a result, it's no surprise I have fought my weight my entire life.

How does this apply? I just know, if I had a beer tonight, and LIKED IT ... I'd be an alcoholic by next weekend ... and that just scares the hell out of me. And as much of a control freak... er, uh, "control enthusiast" as I am, losing that much control over my life simply scared me too much to attempt, so I never did.

So in case you've been wondering ... yes. It CAN be done. The question is ... you know.

Accident Avoidance Workshops

driver trainin' the way it ought'a be!

A completely unrelated exercise
to make your life happier

But I remember my years in High School ... and how it was literally my whole world. It was my friends, my social life, my activities, my work, my education, and although I didn't take it as seriously as I know I could have, I do remember how important it was to have friends and to be accepted. I remember my favorite bands just like you know yours ... I remember who the jocks were, who the band geeks were, who the brains were, who the cheerleaders were ... and I never really fit in to any of them ... I was in wrestling, and my wrestling coach, Mr. Lampe, was also my auto shop teacher. I even baby-sat for him on weekends. It was all about cars for me. By the way, Mr. Lampe now owns an auto auction in northern Minnesota, I understand!



Knowing what I know now, let me tell you why I tell you all this. We know from class that the part of the brain that makes decisions on spatial relationships doesn't develop until you're what age? (Do you remember?) Well, don't forget, it's that same part of the brain that curbs self-destructive behavior, considers consequences for actions! Back in my day, and BEFORE I was 25, as you saw, it was the FEAR OF MY DAD that kept me out of trouble! FEAR of my Dad's discipline came from being spanked, slapped, sworn at, grounded, lost privileges and so forth. And if you're wondering whether he abused me, let me ask you this ... do you have ANY IDEA how I feel about my father today? Do the math.

But these days, ... the worst thing kids have to fear is being stood in the corner as a "time-out" or losing their cell-phone privileges. And guess what? The rate of "experimentation" is at an all time high! It ain't rocket surgery.

You guys, it's not fair that you're having to face all of the temptations with, and exposure to drugs, drinking, tattoos, and other types of self-mutilation as well as sex, careless driving, and so on before your brains are even CAPABLE of truly comprehending the risk and consequences of it all ... but those are the cards we are all dealt ... so ... YOU wanted to start making your own decisions, right? Well ... you gotta be careful what you wish for ... don't you? So again, I will tell you this: You will find yourselves in situations where YOU KNOW what the right decision is ... the only question is ... do YOU have the CHARACTER to act on it?



Accident Avoidance Workshops "Homer-work"

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I will tell you this, and you can confirm it with your parents, or any other adult you like if you want: As hard as this may be to believe, you probably won't spend any amount of time with more than 3 or 4 of your High School friends by the time you are your parents' age. Shortly after you get out of High School, you'll start making new friends from College ... and shortly after that, you'll start making new AND BETTER friends from work, church, your own children's little league games, ... and so on. And you will find your criteria for friend-selection improves as your brain acquires the abilities to weed out the folks you know aren't wired the same as you ... it's just that simple.



So please, you guys, ... if you ever only do ONE THING for me ... let it be this: Don't worry too much about whether or not your friends "approve" of what you know the right decisions are, and certainly don't let a bunch of people you're probably not going to remember in the future cause you in any way to make a decision that will mar you, scar you, or change your life habits for the worse. They're not worth it.

So one of the last benefits I will share with you now of being in the "Uncle Homer Driving Club" is this: You can call me anytime ... for any reason ... if you ever struggle with any of this stuff, and need a "professorial nudge" in the right direction. You guys are my kids too now! But I'm always going to point you in the same direction I promised ... and that is, YOU KNOW what the right decision is ... now go prove to me you have the character to act on it.

I promised my Dad before he died, I would be proud to honor any of his last wishes. Having grown up in the Minneapolis area, he was raised near Minnehaha Creek which started at Lake Minnetonka, became the Minnesota River, and then the Mississippi. He said "I wouldn't mind making that trip down the creek just one more time" meaning he wanted some of his ashes to be sprinkled in the source of Minnehaha Creek. It was the hardest thing I ever did. Sure, it would have been easier not to do it

... I knew what the right decision was ...
... and fortunately, my Dad had given me the character to act on it. Miss ya, Dad.



Accident Avoidance Workshops "Homer-work"