**Mad [Insert Your Name]: Fury on the Road**

**Five Minutes to Thrive: 03-07 June 19**

You’re driving down historic Route 66, making stellar time as you travel from Chicago to L.A. Approaching the outskirts of Amarillo, you observe a beat-up pickup truck with a lift kit and oversize tires swerving between lanes, as though the driver is attempting to shake loose an invisible capuchin hell-bent on overtaking their vehicle. You pass with care and notice the driver is entranced with their phone, casting only sly glances at the roadway ahead, like a surreptitious mysognist hoping not to arouse the suspicion of their significant other. Courteously, you lightly tap on the horn and kindly gesture for them to keep their eyes on the road. Yet shockingly, they are bereft of your sagely advice and respond with a one-fingered display and a menacing shake of their overbearing bolt bucket toward your pristine vehicle. In a moment of desperation, you slam on the gas, light-speeding away from this neanderthal-helmed behemoth, blood pulsing in your veins and temples throbbing with righteous anger. Alas, the brooding ingrate gives chase. Now, your vehicles became an extension of your egos, darting through traffic and accelerating ever faster in an olympic race against unknown temporal constraints. The surrounding desert blurs into oblivion. Other cars become mere objects of hindrance, wholly unaware of the gravity of both the circumstance and that which pulls your machines rapidly toward the unyielding horizontal plane. Children from nearby cars cry out in astonishment. A nonchalant fruit vendor inexplicably crosses the road, only to see his cart explode before his eyes as you barrel uncaringly through it. A flock of doves flee the roadway in slow motion. In the distance, sirens.

As you probably later learned from your court-ordered anger management group therapy, road rage can cause us to make bad decisions. Many circumstances fuel feelings of road rage: overcrowded or congested roadways, inconsiderate drivers, obnoxious drivers, oblivious drivers, distracted drivers, roadwork, or time crunches, just to name a few. But from a mental standpoint, we often feel that other people—whether intentionally or uninentionally—are preventing us from our goal of getting from point A to point B as quickly as possible. Our aggressive responses serve to reassert some notion of control, to point out to other drivers the error of their ways, or to vent frustration. But this achieves nothing in the long-run—and 2/3 of traffic fatalies involve aggressive driving! So, consider alternatives to road rage:

- **Attend to your physical health.** Sleep deprivation causes almost identical adverse effects to your attention and reaction speed when driving as does alcohol—and it tends to make you more irritable and less patient. Just as you (hopefully) wouldn’t drive drunk, don’t drive sleep-deprived! Other factors which impair driving ability include hunger, thirst, or a full bladder…so be aware of their influence!

- **Play soothing music.** Although pirate metal may be a great motivator for a workout, it’s probably less helpful when swashbuckling the concrete waves. Play relaxing music or songs with a slower BPM.

- **Leave early.** Build in a time buffer for unexpected delays. Less pressure = less aggressive driving.

- **Keep reminders of loved ones in your sightline** to orient yourself to the importance of arriving safely.

- **Don’t antagonize; let it go.** Change lanes, slow down, or allow the angry driver to pass. Suppress the urge to make eye contact or gesture, to avoid being further goaded. Oh, and GET OFF YOUR PHONE!

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