

How Driving Meditation Makes You a Safer (and Happier) Driver

After reading that title you may be thinking, "*Meditating while driving? That's crazy!*" You are probably envisioning someone trying to drive a vehicle with their eyes closed, seated in the lotus position and chanting mantras, while trying to form appropriate mudras with their hands. That is the typical experience most people think of when they hear the word "meditation".

Driving meditation, also called mindful driving, is a totally different animal.

Many types of meditation simply ask you to be mindful of your present experience. This means open your mind and all of your senses to everything that is going on around you. Doesn't this sound like the perfect recipe for safe driving? How many hours a day or a week do you spend behind the wheel of your car? Instead of considering this as wasted, stressful time, why not use it as a chance to practice mindfulness?

Notice that this practice is called "*mindful driving*", and not road rage, judgmental driving or revenge driving. Being totally aware of everything that is going on around you while you drive is going to mean that you definitely see poor driving habits by other drivers. When you practice mindfulness, whether driving or seated comfortably in your living room, you become aware of your current experience.

However, you do not judge the experience.

You simply encounter it, allow yourself to experience it, only concerning yourself with truly being in the moment. This means that your vision sees brake lights popping up on a line of vehicles in front of you. Your ears alert you to a car horn. Your hands notice that there is a little movement in your steering wheel, which means you may have encountered a rougher or more difficult driving terrain.

If more people would practice mindful driving, instances of traffic accidents and road rage would drop dramatically.

Mindful driving could lead to lower insurance rates. It can definitely help lower your stress level if you are heading to a job you hate and can help you de-stress after a challenging day at work. This means less stress and anxiety when you arrive home, which promotes a happier home environment.

There are a lot of reasons to practice mindfulness while you drive. Not only do you become a safer and more aware driver, but your daily commute can actually become a stress-reliever, rather than promoting stress and anxiety.

The next time you drive, be present in everything that is going on around you. Develop an awareness of your situation, without reacting judgmentally. You will find more peace and less stress in your life, and may actually enjoy driving when in the past it was an activity you dreaded.