

Dao of Doug Training
Vault

COMPULSIVE HONKING SYNDROME

Common immune deficiencies
leading to a lack of patience.



Do's and Dont's

FINDING ZEN

- Bicylists—Pass on the Left! Don't try to play chicken with a bus pulling in or out of a zone.
- A friendly toot is effective when given in advance to check rear.
- Scan ahead one to two blocks and move eyes left-right-left.
- Take a deep breath and pause.

Before a meeting with a friend, he inspired me with a title for this chapter, and he had already come up with an acronym for this common occurrence heard trip after trip in his cab, and on my bus: C.H.S., Compulsive Honking Syndrome, or as I jokingly added, a part of a person's Compulsive Horn Disorder, C.H.D.! A person with C.H.D. may develop C.H.S. if they do not catch the infection early on in their behavior pattern. For once set in the firing pattern of neurons, only through a meditation routine not unlike followed by a Master Jedi such as Yoda, can the disease be remitted. Or, perhaps, by now reading the Dao of Doug.

The good news, just in: each one of us can change our habits by awareness of staying true to who we really are, and not reacting to a perceived slight by an 'effing moron or douche bag. In slowing down my body movement by quiet time each evening, I get answers. Find your time. Can you do it in the morning, or is before bed better? In this case, I am an evening person. My do list check off is an up and atom energy best suited to the morning hours.

I never would have known this had I not stopped to question and analyze why I was jumping to conclusions or rushing to judgement about a person, place or thing that at first appeared to be in conflict with my path—Just like an automobile butting-out from the curb, double-parked, and giving me the horn. Simply because they could not see the pedestrian crossing in front of me against the light. In fact, there are several common flow patterns that lead to Compulsive Horn Syndrome, and once understood and quantified, can provide the Dao (the Manner of Living) of non-reaction to breaking Compulsive Horn Disorder. Below are the situations that can trigger CHS and lead to permanent disability with CHD. CHP's usually cannot cure this disease, even though with a ticket or reminder, they can stop an infection:

Double Park Backup

This occurs when looking for parking and just missing the space because you pass by a car getting ready to leave. It also can occur if car number 2 sees car number one attended and the brake lights are on in such as the motorist is starting the engine. Car two, the perceived offender, seen first by car three, or me in the bus, can't stand to be blocked in the time it takes car one to pull-away and for double-parked number two to take the space. If car two cannot make the curb on the first pass, beware of compulsive honking syndrome. Also, if car two makes the mistake of waiting for one to pull away, but the driver is just getting something out of the car, with no intention of leaving, car two gets the horn blast for blocking and waiting too long.

I hear the long hard blasts all the time, and it is disheartening. Sure, the plan is to make SF for the Lifestyles of the Rich and Infamous, the tech dream of tomorrow, but the density toll on wealth providing everyone with a car really disrupts the peaceful energy of yore. Especially with unrestricted ride share vehicles entering the city from out of county.



Hide and Seek Parking

This gets a honk when cars are just waiting, double parked, for a pickup or space to come their way. The agony is not easy to recognize when cars are simply going around the block over and over to find parking. This wasted time, of a vehicle trip being spent causing congestion but of no use of conveyance is perhaps the biggest drawback to having a car in San Francisco. The simple act of going to one parking garage and keeping the vehicle put would save this syndrome from infecting others. In San Francisco, *three rights do not make a left* because all streets are not two way, or go through. It is impossible to just go around the block in many cases, and this adds to car clutter on the streets of San Francisco.

The idea that parking should be free is ridiculous. Why should this real-estate be free? The baby boomer's biggest negative impact are the cars we bring to the city. This city, along with Manhattan has older buildings with no parking. That's how city's became functional. Flooding our city with more cars and demanding more free parking is ridiculous and is unsupportable.



Open Curb Construction Sign

This one got me last week. I let them have it with the tradition of Foghorn Leghorn, because my PA exterior loud speaker wasn't working that day. But all my sarcastic skill over the bullhorn would have been moot, as the car was unattended. The car was in a bus stop marked with construction sawhorses, the owner finally returning with take out after a few minutes of waiting. Truth be told, his flashers were on, and I knew it wouldn't be too long a delay for him to return. I got him with "photon torpedoes" my dash camera, as I took a picture of his plate and bumper up against the temporary bus stop sign.

This is part of a class war between civilian city residents and city government. I must use my power as a civil servant wisely and consider the conflict I may be bringing to the table. I continually have friends come to me protesting unfair parking tickets and asking how to proceed. These incidents seem to occur with alarming frequency when I take a picture of other vehicles to send them a ticket. Is my issuance of a fine really impacting my passengers' safety? If driving defensively and leaving myself a space cushion of at least four feet, can I avoid a line delay?



Corner Fire Hydrant

This is such the cool place to hang out, no Muni bus driver or motorist should honk if someone stands here. We have our special hydrant at Fillmore and Geary, and another by Peet's at Sacramento and Fillmore. This Red Zone, usually open, is actually perfect for a quick stop and pick-up, and most pedestrians are cool with this space. It is scary however, if an intending pedestrian is pausing to cross on the light, and a car swoops in fast and furious to stand and drop off. It's a major cause for sidewalk, or street rage, the city version of road rage on the freeway.

Curb Clear Muni

In my first five years as a bus driver, these short red zones, by corners where we turn our bus onto another street, had me angry and depressed every time a car was parked on the corner at a curb clear. On the 24 Divisadero, there are many turns that become dangerous if we can't allow for proper traveling space on our overhead wires. Our poles need to have a wide arc outside the shadow of our driver side window, so we can make the turn without dewiring. Castro to 26th, Noe to 30th, Divisadero to Jackson, Washington to Webster are but a few turns where we need to have no car parked.

Now that we have cameras, I feel empowered. With help from the planning department at our monthly safety meetings, we can provide information to get these turns, or curb clears, freshly painted so motorists can see the red. Better them than me in seeing red!

My hope is the addition of small no parking signs handcrafted with the SFMTA star that state that the red zone is a trolleybus curb clear. (And could me make them in neon colors with a red alert tone, like on a Klingon Bird of Prey?)

Bus Zone Special

These are the guys that never check their rear view mirrors. Did you ride share drivers know a professional driver checks the rear view mirrors every five to eight seconds? *This simple action would prevent those standing or stopping in the middle of a bus zone.* We cannot come to the curb to drop off wheelchairs, walkers, or seniors needing the curb!

This would be a justifiable and morally responsible ticketed offense. It is an expensive mistake, and could simply be avoided if you check your rear views to see if a bus is coming. Thank You!





Farside Crosswalk

If a motorist is looking at their 'smart' phone or GPS screen in hand or on the dash mounted, their view ahead is compromised. Especially when turning. Using peripheral eyesight is dangerous. This is a prime cause for pedestrian injury and death in our city.

Transit professionals certified annually with a VTT card, Verified Transit Training, have the knowledge to scan ahead one to one-and-a-half blocks ahead to see the scene developing. It helps that we have large mirrors and are sitting higher up on the road.

The Compulsive Horn Disorder manifests daily at this crosswalk. A following car, not able to see a crossing pedestrian on the cross street or side street, honks loud and clear because they can't see why the car in front of them is not moving. It's because the far side crosswalk is occupied. Please, dear motorist, accept the path experienced city drivers follow; a space of time of five to seven seconds is needed before the vehicle in front of you moves. This precious pause saves lives. Crosswalk lives matter.

Stale Green

Did you see the light turn green? If you didn't, it is a stale green. Slowing down approaching a stale green is transit safe. Speeding up is not indicated, and can result in finding out what your insurance deductible is for body damage to your car: liability damage to those injured or sent to the hospital. Leaving the scene does not make it any cheaper for your bank account or spiritual awareness account.

Jumping the Gun

This can result in a serious side-on collision and is dangerous to the person jumping the gun. A fatality at Octavia and Oak resulted major trauma and the death of a doctor sitting in the back of a shuttle as the shuttle driver jumped the gun on a fresh green. A trucker heading down the hill at a high speed decided to go through the opposing stale green. The result was death. South of Market streets suffer this same fate.

This broadside collision made the news, and is sad because it occurred at a newly opened parkway that replaced an ugly overhead freeway canopy. Of all the scenarios of using the horn, this one is okay. *This is an example of appropriate use of the horn.* The usual outcome of Compulsive Honking Syndrome telegraphs one message: I am an idiot and my few seconds of impatience are being broadcast in my horn, as I cannot see why you aren't moving. The result is retaliation in that the vehicle you want to move will stay longer in your path.





5150

This is the police code for a crazy person. Muni's code is 800. Blaring a horn at a mentally disabled person walking in the middle of the street can result in a line delay. The horn does not work to your advantage, but only add to delay as they stand and block your vehicle. Broken glass in the front door, a pulled windshield wiper, or kicks and dents in your fender are a high risk from using the horn in this situation. Stopping and waiting is best. A smile never hurts, either.

Change of Direction

This is dangerous and use of the horn may be okay. The signal of a horn is, please make up your mind. Granted, the person in the driver's seat is probably being distracted by a back seat driver, or a map being held by another person in the car. This almost always occurs when there is more than one person in the car. A single toot is best.

Limited Sight Distance

Use of the horn does not help the car in front see any better. Waiting in a queue of vehicles waiting at a traffic circle or four way stop is when CHD manifests. Allow the person in front to go when they feel it is safe. You are not driving their car, and cannot see what they see.

One thing we bus driver's learn early on. We are not the arbiters of determining another motorist's skill on what they think is safe, or how knowledgeable or skillful they are in experienced driving. We can get clues by the way they are driving before a limited sight distance event occurs.

My most common expression to be aware I may compulsively use the horn is, "What are you waiting for, an engraved invitation?"

Merge and Feed

The horn will not be needed if you change lanes when spacing and pace are even. Cranking the wheel hard in stopped traffic only blocks two lanes instead of one. If you want to avoid being honked at, make your lane change early, or when the gap in cars is created when traffic starts moving and an inattentive motorist hasn't looked up from their phone.

Indeed, texting by others has its advantages when they delay in moving when the light turns green. You can use this advantage to change lanes safely and become a Jedi Master. This is the Dao of Doug on the Trolleybus of Happy Destiny.

