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TRAINING IN MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

# In Form

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## A Highway Code for the Emotions

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When you think about it, our daily social interactions at work, at home and at play are a lot like driving in heavy traffic. A number of established social rules and signals help us avoid 'fender-benders' and 'accidents' with others. Following this Highway Code for the emotions prevents us from crashing into drivers who are in a hurry or a bad mood - and ensures that we get to the office in one piece and feeling good.

The ten basic rules of this Highway Code for the emotions are:

1. **Stop at red-** Running a red light always results in a crash. Wait for the light to turn green - and for you to regain control of your emotions.
2. **Fasten your seatbelt-** Monitor your mood and your level of stress. Lighten up and laugh more. Don't sweat the small stuff - only worry about really important things.
3. **Give way to others-** Listen more and speak less. Remember the rights of others.
4. **No overtaking-** Conversation - and communication in general - is a two-way street and overtaking will put you in the fast lane to conflict.
5. **Take breaks in rest areas-** Play sport and live healthy. Set aside some time for yourself and for relaxation. Take a break every few hours or so.
6. **No speeding-** Not everyone likes to drive at 160 km/hour. People at work will co-operate with you more if you respect and adapt to their pace.
7. **Keep your distance-** Don't pressure or hassle others. Take your foot off the accelerator and give them some breathing space.
8. **Save fuel-** If you waste your energy getting angry, you may run out of gas.
9. **Don't drink and drive-** Drugs do not help social traffic to flow - nor do they make you feel better or more motivated. They do cause many conflicts and accidents.
10. **Remember the traffic light for the emotions-** When you find yourself overwhelmed by a strongly negative feeling (or indeed a strongly positive feeling!), always step back and think about the traffic light for the emotions:



## RED

- Stop, calm down and think before you act

## AMBER

- Express how you feel about the problem
- Set yourself a positive objective
- Think of several solutions
- Think of the consequences

## GREEN

- Move forward and try to implement the best plan

If you'd like to learn more about managing conflict and stress, just sign up for one of our *Communication & Interpersonal Skills* courses. More information at [www.readmatthews.com/courses/communication.php](http://www.readmatthews.com/courses/communication.php)