

The Overall Score

I was returning home from my therapist's office after discussing my ego and its complicated support system. While driving I notice a semi truck a few vehicles ahead is driving slowly. As I move into the next lane to bypass the situation, the vehicle that was in front of me puts on its left signal. I find myself conflicted: do I let off the gas and let them in or continue and let them get behind me. Like many others lately this event did not have an immediately obvious answer. By the time I came to that conclusion it was too late to let them in, so I continued past. By the time I passed the semi truck, I realized what might be the root of the conflict.

The vehicle that had put on its left signal had not been looking far enough ahead to see what was coming. As a result, they had put themselves in a situation where they had less power and were dependent upon the kindness of strangers in order to allow them to continue on the way they wanted to. Now my ego takes great pride in the results of its' hyper-vigilance. My ego tells me that I am seldom in a position where its' lack of foresight results in my powerlessness, and I do not mean just driving. One of the ways I motivate myself to consume huge amounts of energy in order to maintain this foresight is to punish myself when I slip up and am unable to predict future events. Therefore, what I had done with his vehicle was to project my fear of not being able to predict future events onto them. Normally my ego would judge them as inferior, berate them for being so lazy and congratulate itself for all of its work that keeps me from feeling powerless. Had I slowed down to let them in without judgment I could have projected something quite different onto them (myself). I could have forgiven myself for being imperfect, accepted that I cannot predict the future and displayed unconditional love for myself.

A couple of minutes later when I came upon drivers zooming past a slow-moving vehicle in the number two lane, I sensed a similar internal conflict. I was able to recognize that my tendency in this situation would be to project the fear, embarrassment and shame that I feel when I have been caught unaware of what is going on around me. Instead of giving into my ego and its appetite for projection, comparison and self-justification, I just moved into the number one lane and drove on by. I did not punish them (myself) by coming dangerously close to the rear end of their vehicle before changing lanes, glaring at them(myself) as I drove by and cutting back into their lane dangerously close to their front bumper. By that simple lack of action, I brought the score to forgiveness, love and tolerance 1 ego, fear and intolerance 1. I shutter to think of what the overall score is, it is probably best that I focus on my progress.

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