

Life... Feeling tense in traffic

Situation:

Several times a week, sometimes as many as four out of five times, on my way to work traffic comes to almost a complete standstill. I've never had panic attacks before, but I'll tell you the last few times I started feeling really trapped. I hate inching along, especially with cars on both sides of me, but I avoid the right hand lane because so many people are turning and that slow things down too. Any recommendations?

Answer:

The first thing that comes to mind is that if traffic isn't whizing along you might as well choose the right lane. Why? If you feel uncomfortable being "blocked in" in the center lane, you might feel more comfortable and secure knowing there is a place to pull off.

It doesn't really sound as if you feel anxious enough to have to actually pull over, but knowing the option is there may make you feel less confined. Another secure thought is that even when you're in the center lane, again when traffic is creeping along, you're more likely to be able to make it in to the right lane if you had to or wanted to. If you put your turn signal on, sooner or later some kind soul will let you in. It all comes down to knowing you do have choices. When we see options, it's impossible to feel truly confined.

Check out what you're thinking. If it's being late you're concerned about – there's not a whole lot that you can do to make traffic move faster. Period! You have no control over all those other cars and the people in them. And if you find yourself miffed at the fact that the county isn't expanding the roadways in direct proportion to the population growth in your area – you have no real control over that either. You can voice your opinion if you choose to, but you can't hire a construction crew to slap down another lane of asphalt.

Have you thought of taking a different route and if that's not practical, leaving the house a little earlier to avoid the gridlock? If neither of those suggestions will work, think about making your vehicle a mobile classroom. There are audio tapes and CD's on loads of subjects available.

Time spent in traffic doesn't have to be wasted time, we can make it productive time.