



## Do You Give Good Directions?

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### **Do you remember learning to drive a standard shift vehicle for the first time?**

Did you pop the clutch out and it would stall? I remember trying to learn how to drive a standard. Two years of one person after another trying to teach me how to gas, clutch, and shift without stalling the car before I could at least hit 5mph. It wasn't pretty. After getting frustrated with one person, I would wait several months before I ran into someone else who would say, "I can teach you. Really, I can."

### **My cousin tries to teach me.**

The last person who ever tried to teach me was my cousin. We had always lived on opposite ends of the country, and I had just recently become acquainted with her. We'd been hanging out for several months, getting to know one another when the conversation came up.

"I can teach you. Really, I can."

I had heard that before! But she followed it up with, "Everyone I have ever taught was driving around within 30 minutes."

Well, that was a boast I could not let go. After all, NO ONE had ever been able to teach me before. Boy, was she in for a surprise!

So, we went out to her car. She ushered me behind the wheel, got in the passenger seat, and instructed me to start the car. Easy enough so far.

"Push in the clutch." Done.

"Put it in gear." Done.

"Give it a little gas." Okay.

"Let out the clutch slowly." Hey no one ever told me to do that before.

"When you feel it grab, freeze your foot on the clutch." Hey! I could feel the gas/engine/wheels start to grab a little.

"Now give it more gas till the car starts to roll." I'm rolling. I'm rolling!

"Once the car has a good roll going, let the clutch out the rest of the way." Yippee! I have it moving!

### **Why my cousin was successful.**

"Unbelievable", I had thought that day. I had never before gotten anything but a movement and a stall. But, you see, no one had every said anything to me except "Let out the clutch as you give it gas." If you follow THOSE directions literally, you are bound and destined to stall.

When giving directions, have you ever taken your directions for granted? Did you know them so well that you were unknowingly leaving some steps out? Or did you do it knowingly, because you

didn't want them to be too cumbersome or too insulting.

### **Knowing when to fill in the steps.**

I once wrote a memo with step-by-step directions for a computer task. This task was taught in a class conducted just that previous Friday. When the participants of the class had received that memo, they had looked at it and threw their hands up in defeat. Their thoughts, "We just learned how to do this in only eight steps and now it's twenty-five!"

For those who knew how to do it on Friday, it looked like I had invented steps. But they didn't truly need those directions. I needed to include all the steps, because there were some people out there who didn't get it the first time around. I had to clarify every step. And after explaining this, those who complained about the extra cumbersome directions, understood why it was needed. But more importantly, the others got it this time. Now everyone could do it.

So next time, try it your normal way. And if they can't "do it right", step back and take a second look at your directions. Maybe a couple more details could make all the difference in the world.

Make This a Great Day!

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