

Truck Metaphor for Understanding and Changing Problem Behaviors

Mark Nickerson, LICSW

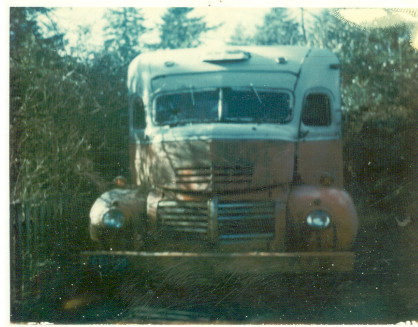
marknickerson@gmail.com
Marknickerson.com



That's me in the truck, a while ago. I used to enjoy driving. I had good work and drove good routes. I'd see interesting things, hang out at my favorite truck stops and meet people along the way.



This was my cab. Well, it's how I wanted my cab to look. Shiny, powerful, cool.



The truth is, I felt more like this. Beat up, worn down, not worth much.



I began to build a bad driving record (angry and violent behavior). I had tickets for driving too fast. People honked at me. Someone called my boss and complained that I scared someone off the road. I hadn't noticed.



I've had accidents, some bad. Now I'm afraid of losing my job, or my license, or even going to jail. My driving record is so bad that my boss is giving me the worst jobs. I don't even like driving anymore.



It always seemed like most drivers had slick cabs and light loads



Me, I felt like I was carrying a bunch of junk



I felt responsible for other people's lives, like my family



And some of them were messed up too



But I kept pushing on, even through the dark, looking as good as I could



I liked being alone on the open roads



But sooner or later,
I'd have to deal with other drivers



Traffic jams, honking horns and bad drivers
(I shouldn't talk). I'd get agitated



Being agitated was like driving in bad weather.



But still, even if there were bad drivers, bad
weather or bad roads, I wouldn't stop



The load I was carrying wasn't strapped down. I was
an accident waiting to happen.



And then I crashed



That's when I knew I had to do something different.
I needed help.



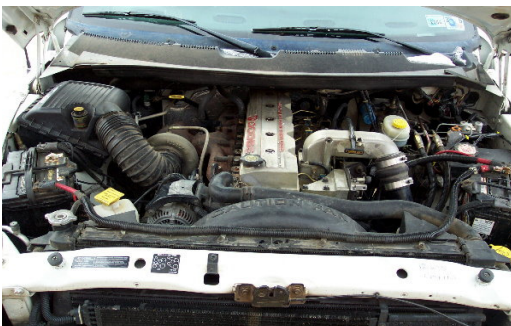
I took a big step and found a therapist.
One step at a time, I began making improvements



I fixed up my cab and learned to respect it.
If I'm not OK in the drivers seat, I'll never drive right.



I've learned to look under the hood and at
other parts of my truck



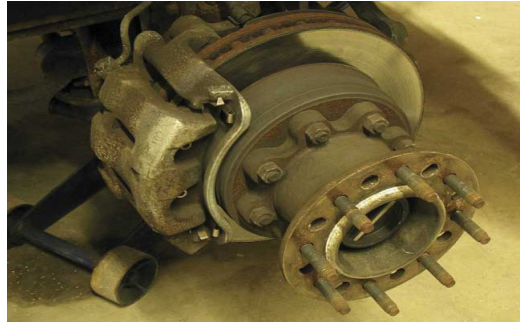
I now realize that a healthy engine is critical
to running smoothly



I've learned to take better care of it



I know you can't grip the road without good tires



I learned the importance of good brakes and knowing when to use them



And How to Preserve My Battery



I learned the importance of good shocks to absorb the bumps on my rides



I now keep my windshield clear so I can see where I am going



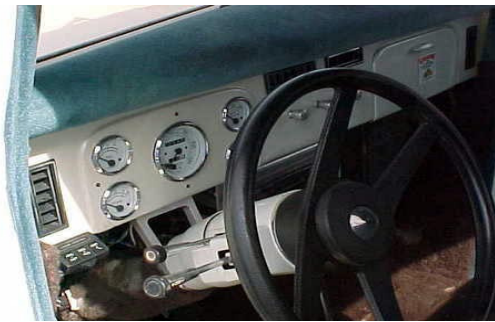
I realized that to be a good driver, I needed some more driving skills



I had to know when to slow down for other drivers



And when to stop



I had to learn how to read the early warnings on my dashboard



I learned how to share the road with others



I learned to trust my wisest self when I need help.
I ask myself for guidance.



I had to learn that every time I get into my truck, I have to be sure I'm in the right state of mind to drive.



I look at maps to know how to get somewhere



Instead of just wandering around



I started to find new buddies who are good mechanics and good drivers



Once I was doing better, I examined what was in my trailer



First, I learned how to strap my load down better



With help, I unloaded the small packages first



Then bigger packages



And eventually, with help,
I got rid of the heaviest loads



Now, my cab does look OK, and my past is
mostly behind me



I keep the needs of others in mind



In heavy traffic, I can keep some distance
from others when necessary



And mostly, I enjoy the ride