Ever had one of those days when things just don't seem to go right? What if it was because of you?

Years ago, five days a week I would take my daughter to daycare in the mornings and pick her up in the evenings. The daycare was located in a small development off a busy main road. There was a stoplight on the main road at the entrance to the development. However, opposite the development entrance was the off ramp to a limited access highway. Most people exiting the highway would usually turn left onto the main road and these drivers frequently drove at high speeds eager to get to wherever they were going.

Knowing that someone turning right at a light has the right-of-way over oncoming traffic turning left, I would pull out into the stream of left turners who, sometimes begrudgingly, yielded. But one day while leaving the development, there was a car in front of me, stopped at the green light waiting to turn right, probably intimidated by the stream of left turning cars. It was obvious they were going to wait for the stream of cars to stop before they turned. The only way that was going to happen was for the light to turn red. And because it was rush hour, there would only be enough time for one car to turn before the main road traffic came through. That meant I couldn't go until the next light cycle and I was already running late. I tried to get them to move by honking and waving, but they refused to move. I was furious and no amount of honking or waving got them to budge an inch.

The light turned red, they turned right and so did I, tailgating them through the intersection, nearly being hit by the oncoming traffic, my anger so great, my face as red as that traffic light. Once started, anger has a way of escalating and my driving reflected this. I sped up quickly, stopped quickly, and cut across lanes to get ahead a measly car length. But traffic lights are the great equalizer and I wasn't gaining much ground, increasing my anger. At one point I lost a moment of concentration and didn't quite stop soon enough, running into the car in front of me that had stopped for another light.

So much for my being a little late, now it was a lotta late. I had a traffic accident and I was at fault.

Has something like this happened to you? Something goes wrong, then more stuff goes wrong, possibly ending in disaster?

What we do affects others. How we think affects what we do. Being mindful, taking a moment to relax and reflect on a larger picture can make a difference in our individual lives and the world.

If I had just waited for that next traffic light cycle, taken time to relax, gone when it was safe, I would have been better off, the person I ran into would have been better off, and so would all those who I cut off beforehand.

C Vance