

KIT MAG

E - MAGAZINE JUNE 26



BLOGS FROM:

Lee Jowett, Mick Knowles, Diane Hall, Ray Seagrave, Alison Harper, Terry Cook, Josh Hollerhan, Terry Lefteri, Pennie Alexander, Nick Butters, Chris Greer

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GOOD CPD**

THE INDUSTRY E-MAG..

That **Keeps Inspiring** Today's Instructors

ALSO THIS ISSUE...

Meet The Instructor
Ask MIA
Protect Young Drivers

Our Partners...
HELP appeal
My Learner Driver



Coaching And Behaviour



**LEE
JOWETT
(FOUNDER)**

Lee Jowett is training manager at K.I.T and owner of i-Can Driving Solutions Ltd. In 2013 he completed the BTEC 4 in Coaching for Driver Development and has since gone on to deliver the BTEC 4 for Tri-Coaching. He is accredited by Cranfield University to deliver 'Driver Metrics' psychometric profiling behavioural change courses and has completed Cranfield's Driver Psychology course. In 2020 he authored the 'Meet The Standards' eBooks collection and has recently been inducted into The Institute of Master Tutors of Driving (IMTD)

One of the biggest shifts in driver training over the past 12 years has been the move towards coaching. The intention was, and still is, absolutely the right one. Move away from an instructor whose role is simply to provide answers, towards one who develops understanding, reflection and independent decision making. Creating safer drivers being the objective.

The difficulty is that coaching itself has almost become the objective, when in reality it is only ever a means of achieving one. The purpose of coaching is not to ask better questions. It is to create better understanding. Unfortunately, the purpose was never clearly defined.

Over the last decade much of the discussion has centred on how we coach. Open questions, active listening, reflection, reducing instruction and encouraging learner responsibility. All worthwhile skills, but they are simply techniques. On their own they tell us very little about what we are actually trying to develop.

If the learner leaves a lesson with greater independence but no greater understanding of themselves, have we really achieved what Client Centred Learning was intended to achieve?

This is perhaps where the conversation needs to move on.

Driving behaviour is not created in isolation. It is influenced by emotions, beliefs, identity, previous experiences, social expectations and countless other psychological processes that have nothing to do with vehicle control. We observe the behaviour because it happens behind the wheel, but the reasons behind it often exist beyond driving itself.

That presents us with an interesting challenge as instructors.



If we spend our time coaching the behaviour we can often improve performance within that situation. If, however, we spend time understanding the person behind the behaviour, we have a far greater opportunity to influence what happens in every future situation. By helping our pupils to understand themselves.

It also explains why some interventions appear successful in the moment, yet have very little lasting impact. The behaviour changes because the context has changed. The understanding has not. A perfect example of the higher levels of the GDE Matrix combining and impacting on performance. Lessons we simply cannot afford to ignore...Negative or positive.

As an industry we have become increasingly interested in what learners are doing. I believe the next stage is to become equally interested in why they are doing it. Because that is where meaningful behaviour change begins.

Developing our industry further isn't about replacing existing coaching techniques or suggesting that instructors have somehow been getting it wrong. It is about widening the lens. Looking beyond the observable driving behaviour and exploring the psychology that shapes it. Understanding emotional regulation, identity, motivation, self-awareness and the many factors that influence decision making long before a steering wheel is ever turned.

If we genuinely believe our role is to create safer drivers, then understanding people has to become just as important as understanding driving.

Coaching was never intended to be the destination. It was always supposed to be the vehicle that got us there.



When friends take the wheel

Helping learners stay safe as passengers

As driving instructors, we spend hours teaching learners how to manage hazards when they are behind the wheel.

But there is another important road safety lesson that deserves attention: how to stay safe when someone else is driving.

The risks don't end in the driving seat

Road safety discussions often focus on newly qualified drivers, and rightly so. However, research into young driver collisions consistently highlights the role of peer influence, distraction and risk-taking behaviour within vehicles carrying groups of young people. Not all new drivers will take risks, **they may make all the right decisions** but still crash due to inexperience in adverse weather, at night or not reacting to danger.

For learners and newly qualified drivers, this means that being a passenger is **not automatically a safe option**.

A friend behind the wheel may be inexperienced. They may be carrying multiple passengers, driving at night, navigating unfamiliar roads or feeling pressure to impress others in the vehicle. In some situations, passengers may witness speeding, dangerous overtaking, mobile phone use or other risky behaviour.

The challenge is that many young people recognise unsafe driving, even the unintentional poor driving but **feel uncomfortable speaking up**.

They may worry about appearing critical, spoiling the mood or damaging a friendship. As a result, they remain **silent even when they feel unsafe**.



Teaching learners to be active passengers

One of the most valuable messages instructors can give learners is that road safety does not stop when they hand over the keys. Passengers are not powerless observers. They can make decisions that significantly affect their own safety.

Learners should be encouraged to:

- Think carefully about who they travel with- write two lists with their families of which friends they do not trust to drive safely and the friends who are less reckless or more experienced
- Avoid getting into a vehicle if the driver appears tired, distracted, angry or impaired
- Always wear a seatbelt and demand others to do the same
- Trust their instincts if a situation feels unsafe
- Speak up if a driver is speeding or taking unnecessary risks. Every passenger has a right to arrive alive
- Arrange alternative transport if they become uncomfortable during a journey

These may sound like simple actions, but for many young people they **require confidence and preparation**.

Discussing these scenarios during lessons and modelling answers helps learners consider their responses before they find themselves in a real-life situation.

See what's on the course- 50% off using the code MLD-KIT-50 limited to the first 150 so be quick!



Giving learners permission to speak up

Many young people know what safe driving looks like because they have spent months learning it.

The challenge is feeling able to act on that knowledge when a friend is driving.

Driving instructors can help by **normalising conversations** about passenger responsibility. Asking questions such as:

- What would you do if your friend started speeding?
- How would you respond if the driver picked up their phone?
- How would you ask to get out of the vehicle? What if the driver refuses to stop?
- What alternatives would you have if you no longer felt safe?

These discussions encourage learners to **explore their options** and see speaking up as a sensible safety decision rather than a social confrontation.

Bringing parents into the conversation

Parents often focus on helping their child become a safe driver. However, it is equally important to prepare them to be a safe passenger.

Encourage families to discuss situations that may arise after lessons have finished and the test has been passed.

Topics might include:

- Accepting lifts from friends
- Travelling late at night
- Recognising unsafe driving behaviour
- Having a backup plan if a journey feels unsafe
- Modelling speaking up in different scenarios
- Agreeing a "no questions asked" lift home if needed

Knowing that support is available can make it much easier for a young person to remove themselves from a risky situation.

Parents have already shown the power of collective action. Across the UK, many school communities have united around smartphone-free childhood initiatives, recognising that it is far easier to protect children when families work together rather than in isolation.

The same principle could transform road safety for newly qualified drivers. Imagine if parents within a friendship group agreed to continue providing lifts after dark, discouraged peer passengers during the first six months of independent driving and offered transport support for a little longer while young drivers gained experience.

By working together, parents could reduce risk for every young person in the group, not just their own child and potentially prevent tragedies before they occur.

A road safety lesson that lasts a lifetime

Every young person will spend far more time as a passenger than as a learner driver. By helping them and their families recognise unsafe situations, trust their judgement and feel confident enough to act, instructors can equip them with skills that may protect them long after the L-plates have come off.

Sometimes the safest decision a young person makes on the road isn't from behind the wheel.

It's deciding not to get into or stay in a car that doesn't feel safe.

Free passenger guide for parents



Share with your learners and help get families talking

SHARE WITH YOUR LEARNERS



BULK BUY DEAL



EMAIL KATE



Find out more: www.mylearnerdriver.co.uk



**PROTECT
YOUNG DRIVERS**

Time for change

**24% of fatal or serious
injury collisions in Britain
involve 17 to 24-year-olds**

**A new national resource bringing
together research, real stories and
evidence to strengthen action to
better protect young drivers.**

In Britain, one in five new drivers
crash in the first year after passing
their test. With the right support
and safeguards, we can prevent lives
being lost and families torn apart.

It's time to act.

Find out more at:
protectyoungdrivers.com



On the website, you'll find

- ✓ Facts and statistics on young driver risk, behaviour and brain development
- ✓ International success stories showing how stronger licensing is saving lives across the world
- ✓ Research and history tracing decades of concern and campaigning for change
- ✓ Real stories from bereaved families
- ✓ A growing network of partners from enforcement, policy, academia and road safety

Website partners include



TOPIC: WORKSHOPS

Knowledgeable CCL & SC / PT3 Workshops

Book To Attend



KNOWLEDGEABLE
INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

The workshops that
Keep Inspiring Todays instructors



L OF A WAY TO HELP YOUR PUPILS FROM STRESS TO SUCCESS: UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S LEARNER DRIVERS

Diane Hall & Chris Allsopp are taking their Driving Test Nerves Specialist Workshop around the Country. See the ad in KITMAG for a date in your area....or treat yourself to a day out:-

For more information or to book. Follow the :[link](#)



**DIANE HALL
(NERVES SPECIALIST)**



For those instructors who have attended our Driving Test Nerves Specialist workshop, you'll remember Chris's insightful talk, Understanding 'Snowflake' Syndrome. In this session, he examines why the term - often used derogatorily to describe younger generations - has emerged, and why many learners today appear more emotionally sensitive. Chris highlights how these generational differences affect learning and why adapting your teaching approach is essential to support learners effectively.

Following numerous requests for more detail, we are thrilled to announce that Chris will be delivering a dedicated 4-hour Zoom workshop, spread across two evenings, where he will delve deeper into these themes.

This workshop will be complemented by...

- A comprehensive training manual - practical strategies and guidance to help you understand, engage, and support emotionally sensitive learners with confidence.
- CPD Certificate
- Ongoing support
- 2 months free access for you and your pupils to Driving Test Nerves Pro - contains video demonstrations of all the psychological tools from our workshop.

Why This Workshop Matters

Learners today are growing up in a digital-first world. Constant stimulation from smartphones, social media, and notifications has altered attention spans and lack of emotional resilience. Combined with the pressures of passing driving tests, this can create a perfect storm of cognitive overload. Many learners struggle to process mirrors, speed, hazards, steering, road signs, clutch control, positioning, verbal instructions, and risk assessment - all simultaneously. Understanding these pressures is crucial for instructors aiming to deliver effective lessons.

What You'll Learn

The Zoom workshop is structured into nine interactive sections, each tailored to address specific aspects of modern learner behaviour:

Introduction & Instructor Experiences - Explore common learner behaviours that frustrate instructors, understand why some learners become argumentative or disengaged, and discuss how emotional reactions affect lesson outcomes.

Understanding Modern Learners - Examine the impact of digital dependency, social comparison, and information overload on learning. We'll also explore why some learners repeat mistakes under stress and how anxiety can block memory retention.

Stress, Anxiety & Cortisol - Learn how stress hormones like cortisol influence behaviour, concentration, and decision-making and a loss of retention. Identify driving-specific anxiety triggers such as roundabouts, busy junctions, stalling, or examiner pressure, and discover how to create an emotionally safe learning environment.

Empathy Decline & Digital Overload - Delve into research showing reduced empathy and emotional sensitivity in younger generations. Understand how social media and online validation culture affect learners' patience, resilience, and reactions to feedback.

Gen Z Mindsets - Gain insights into generational behaviours. Younger learners often feel uncertain, financially stressed, and distrustful of authority. We'll discuss strategies to manage defensiveness, withdrawal, and emotional shutdown during lessons.

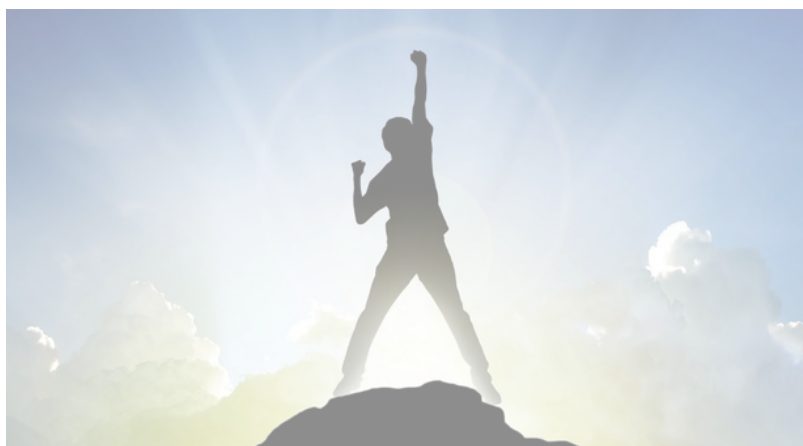
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For more information or to book. Follow the : [link](#)



**DIANE HALL
(NERVES SPECIALIST)**



Oppositional Behaviour & Emotional Triggers - Learn to identify defensive behaviours, including arguing, blaming, passive resistance, or emotional outbursts. The workshop covers the escalation cycle and provides roleplay exercises to practice calming strategies.

Instructor Communication & De-Escalation - Master techniques for delivering concise instructions, neutral feedback, and constructive corrections. Learn to manage your own emotional responses to prevent increasing learner stress and discover practical communication scripts that foster psychological safety.

Practical Coaching Tools & Case Studies - Explore actionable strategies like chunked learning, reflection questions, emotional check-ins, breathing resets, and positive reinforcement. Participants will review real case studies, including anxious, defensive, or digitally distracted learners, and discuss effective coaching approaches.

Final Reflection & Q&A - Consolidate learnings, reflect on key takeaways, and engage in discussion - or remain a 'silent participant' if you prefer! Understand how emotional overload and digital overstimulation influence lesson outcomes and explore ways to build learner confidence while creating safer drivers.

Interactive and Practical Approach

Unlike traditional lectures, this workshop is designed for flexibility. You can choose to engage or simply watch and absorb the content without active participation. Either way, you'll gain practical tools that can be applied immediately in your lessons, helping you teach driving skills while also supporting learners' emotional regulation and confidence.

Who Should Attend

This Zoom workshop is ideal for all driving instructors, whether you are newly qualified or have years of experience. If you've ever faced learners who are anxious, easily frustrated, or distracted by technology, this session will provide actionable insights to improve engagement, lesson retention, and overall teaching effectiveness.

Why Emotional Intelligence Matters

Research consistently shows that learners perform better when they feel safe, respected, and supported. By understanding the emotional side of learning, instructors can reduce conflict, foster a positive learning environment, and help learners reach their full potential. Emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication are now essential skills for modern driving instructors - not just optional extras.



THURSDAY 27TH AUGUST 6.00PM - 8.00PM &
FRIDAY 28TH AUGUST 6.00 PM TO 8.00 PM

BOOK NOW

Join us for this transformative 4-hour Zoom workshop and gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive as a driving instructor in today's digital and emotionally complex learning environment. Equip yourself with the tools to handle modern learner challenges, improve lesson outcomes, and help your learners succeed both on the road and emotionally.

Spaces are limited, so reserve your spot today and start transforming your lessons from stressful to successful. Your learners - and your teaching experience - will thank you.

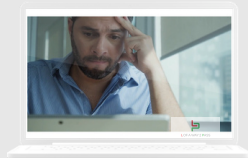


1 PART 2/3 AND STANDARDS CHECK NERVES

2 DRIVING TEST NERVES

Driving Test Nerves Specialist workshops

Do you sometimes feel more like a counsellor or therapist than a driving instructor?
Learn amazing unique techniques to help your pupils with driving anxiety and test nerves, and for your own Part 2/3 or SC anxiety as well!

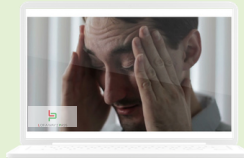


All delegates benefit from..

- FREE Zoom sessions
- How to beat Part 2/3/SC nerves and anxiety online course
- Two months FREE access to Driving Test Nerves Pro: giving you and your pupils access to the techniques covered in the workshop
- Workshop Manual
- Instructor Training Manual
- Two Minute Techniques Guide
- CPD Certificate
- Membership to private Driving Test Nerves Specialist Facebook group
- Featured on www.Lofaway2pass.com as Driving Test Nerves Specialists

Driving Test Nerves Pro

Provide your pupils with unlimited access to amazing techniques to combat Driving Anxiety & Test Day Nerves. In addition to happy pupils, it can also help to increase your pass rate and avoid those Standards Check Triggers!



Subscribers will gain..

- The Key to understanding how we 'create' emotions
- Strategies to control driving anxiety and test day nerves
- Techniques to eliminate nerves, fear, panic, intimidation, overwhelm & dread
- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Ten second technique to stop muddling up left & right
- In-car demonstration of techniques with a learner driver
- Eliminating 'Auditory Exclusion', when what you say goes in one ear and out the other!

TEST NERVES SPECIALISTS



LOF A WAY 2 PASS



1-2-1 zoom sessions for Part 2/3/SC nerves

Do you 'freeze' and can't get your words out, or try to get 40 hours of training into one sentence? If nerves get the better of you on the day, or you lack confidence in your ability, this two-hour session will enable you to keep calm, focused, and confident.

You will benefit from..

- Understanding how you 'create' negative emotions
- Techniques to keep you calm
- Control your emotions rather than them controlling you
- Full access to the online course
- Strategies to bring your best performance when it matters
- Suitable for part 2,3 and Standard Check

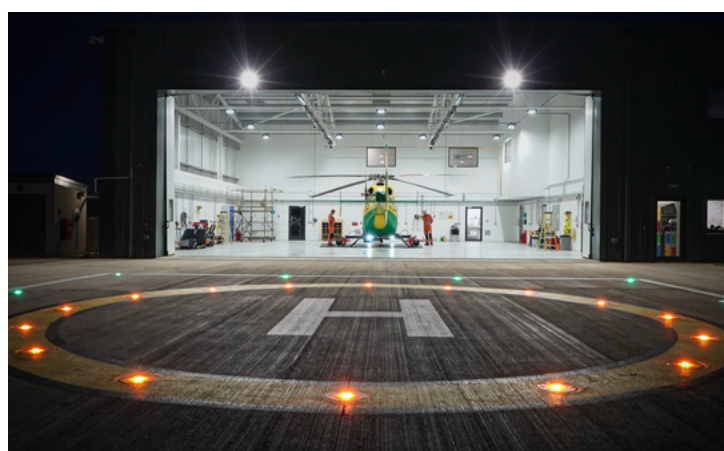
Keep Calm Quiz

This is a brand new FREE resource to help you to engage with your learners, enabling you to analyse their behaviours, emotions, physical sensations and thoughts that may hinder their progress when learning to driving and taking their test. Depending on the results, we have a range of resources to help you to help them.

Why not take the quiz yourself? If you answer mostly 'A' then you have good control of your emotions, and so long as you are trained to the required standard, you should be successful. If it's mostly 'B' then you may just need a nudge in the right direction. If it's 'C', then you may be controlled by your emotions, and this could prove challenging in passing your part 2/3 or SC, so why not get in touch to see how we can help?



[Take the quiz](#)



HELP Appeal: TRANSFORMING EMERGENCY CARE BEYOND HELIPADS

The HELP Appeal is best known for its funding of NHS hospital helipads across the country, helping to reduce the time it takes for critically ill and injured patients to reach lifesaving treatment at Emergency Departments after landing in air ambulances. However, our support also extends to funding air ambulance bases, ensuring crews have the facilities they need to respond quickly, efficiently and safely to medical emergencies.

Modern air ambulance operations demand high-quality infrastructure that can support a rapid 24/7 emergency response. Many existing bases were built years ago and no longer meet the needs of an increasingly busy service. Our funding helps transform these bases into purpose-built facilities designed for today's emergency care demands.



A recent example of this support can be seen at the Midlands Air Ambulance. The HELP Appeal provided significant funding to upgrade its air bases, creating state-of-the-art infrastructure that includes expanded hangars, modern crew accommodation and improved operational spaces. These improvements help ensure the charity's aircraft and crews can be ready to respond at a moment's notice. On our vital support, they said:



"This £2 million redevelopment, made possible thanks to the generous funding from the HELP Appeal, marks a transformative milestone ... The upgraded facilities will...strengthen our ability to respond swiftly to emergencies and deliver lifesaving care..."

Each base the HELP Appeal funds across the country represents more than bricks and mortar. It is a lifeline for patients, enabling crews to reach emergencies faster and deliver critical care at the roadside and in remote locations. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we will continue to help air ambulances across the country, which will ultimately help to save more lives.



To learn how you can support the HELP Appeal, which has funded 57 NHS hospital helipads with another 40 in the pipeline, as well as funding air ambulance bases, critical care cars, medical equipment and PPE for air ambulance charities and volunteer medics, please visit: www.helpappeal.org.uk.

MEET THE INSTRUCTOR :

Diana Todd



Name Diana Todd

Birthday 11th February 1981

Occupation - Driving Instructor, Adi Trainer, Director of Inspire

Instructor Training and Support Driving School

Current Car - Toyota Corolla

Dream car - Large 4 x 4 Range Rover for when I sit in the back 🚗



Favourite lesson - first lesson, it's nice to get them excited and see what they already know.

Least favourite part of your job - Telling pupils, parents etc that they aren't quite ready. Even though this conversation is had with plenty of notice, it's never nice.

What annoys you - doing my weekly diary around schedules, mine, hubbys and pupils.

What part of your job do you enjoy - I really love talking and supporting on post test behaviours and decisions they may be tempted to make. I love helping them bridge the gap between what they are currently aware of and how they might overcome future potential risks. I love rescue training PDI's as well. I wish I didn't have to but I love seeing the realisation of how easy the process can be when it's simplified.



Most memorable moment in your current role - we were really proud to have won 4 awards at The Intelligent Instructor Awards. We won a Bronze award for Independent Training Provider, which is our core business, but it was so lovely to see our free content receive such high recognition as well. Our Menopause support group, received a gold award for community champion, content Creator of the Year was Silver and gold for Social Media Influencer of the year. We do so much in our community of instructors and this truly resonated with us.

Funniest moments in your role - when I accidentally kidnapped my pupil as I thought the lesson was meant to end at a particular time. This was unfortunately an hour later than it should have ended. I then tried to get us back to their house with my very lacking Geography skills and ended up being about 2 hours late. I also had to get someone to pick up my Daughter from school

Biggest influence on your career - Lou Walsh. That lovely lady seen something in me that kickstarted my career, in this industry and introduced me to my lovely Business Partner Phillip Cowley.

Professional ambition - I would like to grow our own school. My main ambition is to ensure PDI's come into this industry receiving the right support.

Personal ambition - I'd love to be healthier. I'd also love to start a road safety initiative for younger school children. Helping them be their very own community detectives in order to keep them safe.

At the end of a working day, how do you wind down - I love to play games with my Daughter and Husband. Watch family movies or support my Daughter with her homework.



Hobbies and interests - I love to read, I also love to swim as it's just me and my own thoughts. No technology and no distractions.

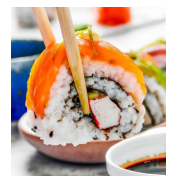
Favourite food - All Asian food, particularly sushi.

Favourite film - Shawshank Redemption

What music do you like to listen to - Musicals. R & B / pop.

If you weren't a (driving instructor), what would you be? Either a Teacher of some kind or as a business owner developing younger children's confidence and skills.

If you could meet anyone...who would you most like to meet? - The Queen. I would love to share some of her insights but I also think she had a cracking sense of humour.



If you won the lottery...I would go on a Caribbean cruise and I would buy a house with a swimming pool, so I could chill out more.

TOPIC: BUSINESS COACHING

BUSINESS - WORK ON YOUR BUSINESS - NOT IN YOUR BUSINESS

Mick Knowles is the Co-Founder and Business Development Manager of K.I.T., the host of The DID Podcast (now The KIT Podcast), and owner of Xpert Driver Training Ltd. In 2013 he completed the BTEC Level 3 in Coaching for Driver Development followed in 2014 by the BTEC Level 4 in Coaching for Driver Development and has since gone on to become a Tri-Coaching Trainer. He is accredited by Cranfield University to deliver 'Driver Metrics' psychometric profiling behavioural change courses. Mick's desire to develop not only himself but other ADI's has led to the formation of KIT. In 2021 due to his love of podcasts he launched The DID Podcast. In 2021 he was runner up in the Influencer of the Year Category at the GoRoadie Awards and Xpert Driver Training were runners up in the Regional Driving School of The Year Category at the Intelligent Instructor Awards.



**MICK
KNOWLES
(FOUNDER)**

Many driving instructors spend years working in their business but never truly work on it. There is a big difference between the two. Working in your business means delivering lessons, replying to messages, sorting diaries, chasing payments, and dealing with the constant day-to-day demands that come with being self-employed. Those things keep the business running, but if that is all you ever do, it is easy to become stuck in the same cycle year after year. Working on your business is where growth happens.

It is stepping back and asking bigger questions.

Why are learners choosing you?

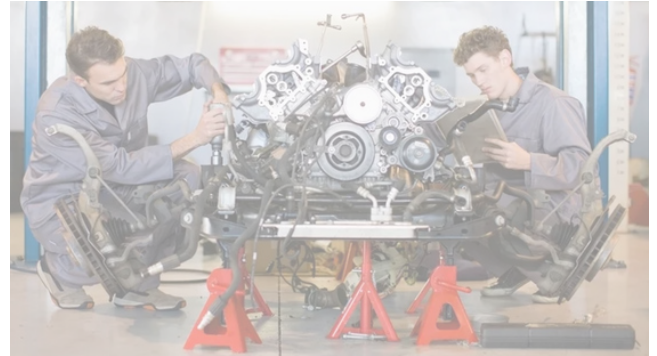
What systems do you actually have in place?

Could your business cope if you were ill for a week?

Are you building something sustainable or simply surviving month to month?

Many instructors never stop long enough to think about those things because they are too busy trying to get through today's lessons. One of the biggest reasons instructors struggle to work on their business is because taking time away from lessons feels like losing money. Cancelling lessons to attend training, improve systems, build a website, or develop marketing can feel uncomfortable when income depends on hours worked.

But this is where many instructors become trapped. They focus so heavily on protecting today's income that they neglect the things that could improve their future income significantly. Working on your business often creates far more money long term than squeezing in another few lessons this week. Improving your standards can lead to more referrals. Improving your social media presence can increase enquiries.



Developing better systems can reduce stress and wasted time. Investing in CPD can improve lesson quality, confidence, and reputation. The problem is that these things rarely produce instant results. Delivering another lesson gives immediate income. Spending a day improving your business does not feel productive in the same way, even though it may have a far greater long-term impact. The instructors who move forward are rarely the ones who simply work the longest hours. They are usually the ones who become more intentional about what they are building.

One of the biggest mindset shifts is understanding that being fully booked does not automatically mean your business is healthy.

You can be fully booked and still undercharging.

Fully booked and burnt out.

Fully booked and completely dependent on physically delivering every lesson yourself.

That is not freedom. That is dependency. This is why business development matters. For some instructors, working on the business means improving lesson structure or developing a stronger understanding of client-centred learning. For others, it might mean improving branding, creating better onboarding systems, building a stronger online presence, or developing additional income streams outside of simply sitting in the car all day.

Even small changes can make a huge difference over time. Using social media consistently. Reflecting properly on lessons. Building better learner systems. Upskilling through CPD. Improving communication and professionalism.

All of these things strengthen a business.

If you start working on your business, you begin creating something more stable, more professional, and more sustainable long term.



Knowledgeable INSTRUCTO R TRAINING VIDEO...

Hub

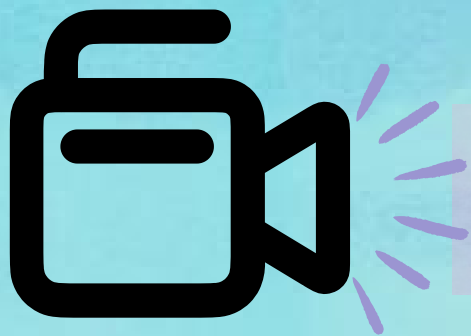
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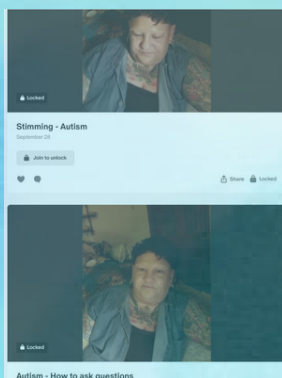
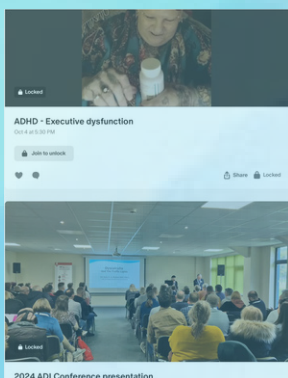
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Talking

SEND

With

Dr Julia Malkin MBE



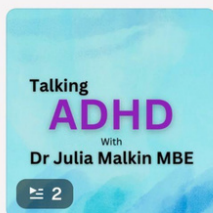
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By joining this tier you will gain access to all videos. These are short videos covering a variety of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. You will also have the option to ask questions and make requests for videos on topics you would like more information on.



Talking ADHD



Talking Autism



Dyscalculia



Personal Passions

Do you want to be part of something good?

Dr Julia Malkin M.B.E. has put together the perfect tool for instructors to develop their knowledge and understanding of S.E.N.

Her video subscription site houses a unique collection of videos that you can work through from your own home and develop your skills!

And the collections continue to grow! With more content added regularly

Do you know how to help learners with additional needs?

These videos will explain what it might look like and how you can help!

Learn from someone who has 7 of these conditions, a PHD studying it and is a qualified driving instructor!!

Ray Seagrave

CLIENT CENTERED - COACHING

Hi its Ray! I'm a highly respected trainer in the driver training industry, a DVSA grade 'A' ADI and grade 'A' (51/51) ORDIT registered trainer. I'm an accredited coach and mentor with the IAPC&M. I'm commitment to personal and professional development of ADI's and PDI's in the industry with the aim of being a motivational mentor. My courses and 1:2:1 coaching and mentoring training sessions are among the most popular in the industry. Furthermore, I am a notable speaker at key industry events, including Intelligent Instructor and delivering ADINJC masterclasses. My insights on latest trends and innovative techniques make me a trusted information source in this evolving industry. My dedication to uplift the standard of driver education remains unwavering. My diverse accomplishments and consistent drive to enhance driver training make me a true industry leader Ray Seagrave.



RAY SEAGRAVE



If everything is built around “don’t make mistakes,” your pupil can get through their test. But that doesn’t mean their decisions will hold up when things change.

A better way to look at it is this.

“I drive the way I do because I understand what I’m seeing, I understand the risks, and I choose to act in a way that keeps things safe.” Same result, different foundation. That’s what carries forward after the test.

You’ll hear people say, “Once they’re on their own, they’ll do what they want anyway.” I’ve heard lots of instructors say that too.

There’s some truth in that. But it depends what they’ve learned. If it’s all been about getting through the test, they’ll fall back into whatever habits and pressures were already there. If they’ve learned how to read situations, think things through, and recognise when pressure is influencing them, then even when they do what they want, it’s different.

So the real question becomes:
When you’re not there, how do they want to be making decisions?
That’s what you’re shaping. When something goes wrong, it’s worth asking yourself:

Are you dealing with the fault, or the decision that caused it?

In the lesson, it helps to be clear what role you’re in. A simple way to look at it:

Are you helping them think, or are you giving them the answer?
If you’re helping them think, you’re coaching.

“What made you decide to go?”
“What were your options?”
“What did you base that on?”

If you’re guiding where they look or what they consider, you’re still coaching, just a bit more directed.

“What are you noticing about their speed on the right?”
“What does that tell you about the gap?”
“What are you thinking here, go or stop?”

They’re still making the decision.

Then there are times you just need to step in and teach.

“Wait for a bigger gap.”
“You need to slow down earlier.”
“This is what I’m looking for here...”

That’s not wrong. It’s necessary at times. The key is knowing which one you’re doing and why. Through all of this, safety still comes first.

If it’s becoming unsafe, you step in. Sort it, then talk about it afterwards. Coaching comes after control, not instead of it.

So what does this actually look like in your next lesson? This is where it tends to move up a level. Good coaching isn’t just about asking better questions. It’s about when you ask them, why you ask them, and what you do with the answer. Here are five ways to push this a bit further.

1) Know why you’re asking the question

Before you say anything, be clear what you’re trying to get out of it.

“What do I need to understand about that decision?”

If you don’t know, the question will just drift.
Get the timing right

2) In the moment, keep it simple.

“What are you thinking, go or stop?”
Then once it’s over, go deeper.
“What made that feel like the right time?”
Look for patterns, not one-offs

Ray Seagrave

CLIENT CENTERED - COACHING

Hi its Ray! I'm a highly respected trainer in the driver training industry, a DVSA grade 'A' ADI and grade 'A' (51/51) ORDIT registered trainer. I'm an accredited coach and mentor with the IAPC&M. I'm commitment to personal and professional development of ADI's and PDI's in the industry with the aim of being a motivational mentor. My courses and 1:2:1 coaching and mentoring training sessions are among the most popular in the industry. Furthermore, I am a notable speaker at key industry events, including Intelligent Instructor and delivering ADINJC masterclasses. My insights on latest trends and innovative techniques make me a trusted information source in this evolving industry. My dedication to uplift the standard of driver education remains unwavering. My diverse accomplishments and consistent drive to enhance driver training make me a true industry leader Ray Seagrave.



RAY
SEAGRAVE



3) Don't treat each situation as separate.

"I'm noticing when there's a car behind, your decision speeds up. What's going on there?" That's where behaviour starts to change.

4) Agree the focus and the help before they move

"What are you focusing on for the next couple?"

"What level of help do you want from me?"

Now it's clear for both of you.

5) Turn reflection into action

Don't leave it at "yeah, I see that."

"What will you do differently next time?"

"What will you be looking for on the next one?"

Then check it. That's where it sticks. If you work like this, you'll notice a shift. They start talking more about what they're seeing and thinking. They pick things up earlier. Their decisions start to make more sense, even when things change around them.

That's when it starts to hit home. If you want to go deeper with client-centred coaching, both of my books break it down using real examples.

The Driving Instructor's Ultimate Guide to Coaching Questions focuses on what to ask, when to ask it, and what each type of question is actually doing. The Driving Instructor's Ultimate Guide to Client-Centred Lessons looks at coaching in car, how you structure the whole lesson so the learner is thinking, deciding, and taking responsibility all the way through.

They're both built around you being the best trainer you can be including examples and what actually happens in the car. Here's the last part.. A better way to look at it is this.

"I drive the way I do because I understand what I'm seeing, I understand the risks, and I choose to act in a way that keeps things safe."

Same result, different foundation. That's what carries forward after the test. You'll hear people say, "Once they're on their own, they'll do what they want anyway." I've heard lots of instructors say that too.

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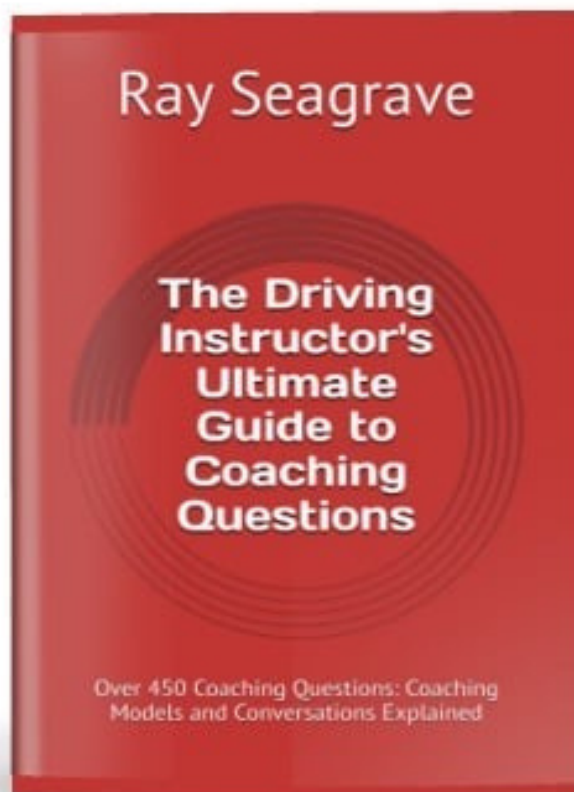
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SPEED OF PROCESSING

I'm Pennie Alexander, I qualified in 2014 after being a gymnastics coach for about 15 years. I still teach learners, I train PDIs, and I work full-time as a driving assessor ensuring people with medical conditions are safe to continue driving and help those with disabilities discover which adaptations they will require to get on the road.



**PENNIE
ALEXANDER**



In the last article I spoke about sequencing and coordination, explaining how our brains are like sponges absorbing information as we grow. The sponge absorbs the fluid filling it to capacity, then the excess fluid leaks out, the speed at which this happens depends on how quickly the sponge is filled. Equating this to learning, as we age, retaining information becomes more difficult, if we overload our brain with information, it just floods back out, so we don't remember what we tried to learn.

We need to be able to process information, understand and reason it, so learning in segments allows the time to absorb the information. If we use information we already know, then the learning is simplified. We're rearranging the information to make it more understandable. Speed of processing is the time it takes to perform a cognitive task. This can vary from person to person and does not mean a person is more intelligent than another if their processing speed is faster. It is simply the time it takes an individual to be given information and to understand that information sufficiently to be able to use and apply it (Cognifit.com, 2025).

We process different information in different ways, we may be quicker to process the written word, rather than the spoken and vice versa. We may benefit from seeing something or doing something, rather than simply reading or listening. Knowing how we process information easily will help learning take place at a faster pace. If an individual is slow at processing information, their ability to drive may be affected. This doesn't necessarily mean they cannot drive, but they may have to adjust their driving to be able to cope with the speed of travel.

How many new learners have you had that think driving at 10mph is like driving at lightning speed? They're too scared to put the car into 2nd gear as it's too fast!

Before learning to drive, the fastest some people may have travelled is on a bicycle. Yes, they've been in cars, or buses, but they haven't been in control. Some may have never used a bike, so the fastest they have ever experienced is running, probably a maximum of 4 or 5mph! Therefore, when they get in a car for the first time and start moving at 10mph they find it frightening. Their brain is struggling to process the information as it hasn't had to work at that speed previously.

Ideally you want to allow them to increase their speed according to their ability, occasionally they may need encouragement for this to happen, particularly if they are very nervous. Allow this to happen naturally so make sure you're in an environment where other road users won't be affected, or have space to pass. Keeping them in quiet areas so they can concentrate on each skill without too many interruptions and find out by talking to them what will help them learn each skill: reading about it, discussing it, looking at visual aids, watching it (demonstration, YouTube). If you've tried one method and they are struggling, suggest something else.

I've had many learners say they don't want a demonstration when trying to work out how to navigate a particular roundabout near me, we'll exhaust all avenues and eventually they'll agree to watch me drive it. When I do this, we'll discuss how they want the demonstration, with a full talk through, a partial talk through or in silence, depending on their needs and what might help them best. This is often the final piece in the jigsaw for them and everything falls into place.



SPEED OF PROCESSING

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**PENNIE
ALEXANDER**



If we become overloaded it becomes very difficult to process the information ahead of us. We may not hear what is being said, as our brain “switches off” unnecessary senses, to enable us to deal with the immediate threat (as seen to the brain).

Thus, if you’ve had a learner that suddenly appears to ignore everything you are saying to them, they may well be in Flight mode, they may require physical intervention to bring them back to thinking mode. If this does occur, it’s important to discuss what happened, find out their concerns or fears regarding the situation and take a step back in their training.

There are medical conditions that may affect the speed at which we process information; stroke, dementias, head injuries, and learning disorders; ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia. People with slower processing may take longer to learn, some may struggle with certain things on their journey of learning to drive and some may not be able to drive, as they cannot process the information required at a fast enough pace to be safe on the road.

When teaching people to drive, be patient with them, allow them to grasp the initial skills of clutch control (if in a manual vehicle), moving off, stopping, steering and positioning, gradually. This will ensure they have processed what is required of them and can understand and reason why they need to do certain things.

Don’t just assume that they will be able to control the car at 30mph after moving the car two or three times.

Yes, they need stretching out of their comfort zone, but ensuring the basic skills are in place, will make both their journey and yours much easier and happier.

We all know, or should know about commentary driving, say what you see, say what you reasonably expect to happen and say what you’re going to do. “There’s a horse-muck in the road, I could expect a horse and rider around the bend, I’m going to slow down just in case” or something along those lines. I’m going to get you to do a different commentary.

As you’re approaching a situation let’s say a junction to turn left, check to see what’s happening behind you, then ask yourself out loud “anything behind you?” then check again, tell yourself, “release the gas” then do it; “indicate left” then do it; “brake gently” then do it; “off the brake, clutch down” then do it; “select 2nd gear” then do it; “off the clutch” then do it; “look into the junction and steer” then do it! Did you manage it? How difficult was it? How long did it take you?

Now add in the fact that a learner needs to hear what you are saying, process that information, think about what they actually need to do, and then do it. My final question is: Are you giving your learner enough time when you give them an instruction?

To test your own processing skills, scan the QR code to join Cognifit.com and see if you can improve your cognition.



SOCIAL MEDIA : HOW TO FIND STUDENTS FOR YOUR DRIVING SCHOOL USING FACEBOOK

Alison Harper has worked in social media marketing for over ten years, marketing several UK-based organisations, such as volunteer centres, community cafés, car-parts suppliers, artists, authors, insurance brokers, mental health organisations, word artists, beauticians, driving schools and more. She provides specialist marketing services on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.



ALISON HARPER



Running a driving school is one thing, keeping a steady flow of students is another. In recent years, there has been an influx of new and upcoming driving schools and people changing careers to become instructors, so competition is now fiercer than it was five years ago when everyone had huge backlogs due to the pandemic. This month, I'm going to talk about how you can use Facebook to get ahead of the game and make sure your diary is always full.

Facebook remains one of the most powerful and affordable tools to attract new learners. If you use it strategically, you can turn it into a consistent source of bookings.

1. Set Up a Professional Facebook Presence

Start with a dedicated business page for your driving school.

This is your digital storefront.

Make sure you:

- Use a clear profile picture (your logo or branded car)
- Add a cover photo that shows your car, students, or results
- Include contact details, pricing basics, and your service area
- Turn on messaging, so potential students can contact you instantly
- Complete your bio to show the areas you cover

2. Post Content Three Times a Week That Builds Trust

Most learners feel nervous about choosing an instructor. Your content should reduce that anxiety.

Focus on:

- Pass photos (with happy students holding certificates)
- Short tips for learners (e.g., parking, roundabouts)
- Testimonials and reviews
- Behind-the-scenes clips of lessons (with permission)

3. Join and Engage in Local Facebook Groups. Search for groups in your area like:

- Community groups
- Buy & sell groups
- Student or college groups

Don't just spam promotions. Instead:

- Answer questions about learning to drive
- Offer helpful advice
- Occasionally mention your services

4. Encourage Word-of-Mouth Sharing

Happy students are your best marketing tool.

After a student passes:

- Ask them to tag your page
- Encourage them to share their pass photo

5. Use Facebook Messenger as a Booking Tool

Speed matters. If someone messages you and waits hours for a reply, they'll move on.

Set up:

- Instant auto-replies ("Thanks for messaging! I'll respond shortly.")
- Quick answers to common questions (pricing, availability, areas covered)

6. Run Limited-Time Offers

People act faster when there's urgency.

Examples:

- "5 spaces available this month"
- "£20 off your first lesson, this week only"
- "Block booking discount for new learners"

Facebook isn't just about posting. It's about building trust, showing results, and staying visible in your local area. If you combine consistent content, smart ads, and genuine engagement, you can turn it into a full diary.

POWER LANGUAGE THE BODYGUARDS

Terry has been an ADI for over 25 years and an ADI/PDI trainer for over 14 years. He holds a qualification as a Professional Driver Coach and delivers online and in-car training workshops based on his extensive knowledge of coaching. He scored the perfect 51/51 on his latest ORDIT inspection. He is an International Authority for Professional Coaches and Mentors Accredited Coach and a Tricres trained business coach and runs his own business/personal coaching company, Done Stressing. Using his expertise to help his clients discover a clear pathway forwards on a personal and business level.



So last time I discussed how every answer or response you get should be seen as a gift and reasons why the gift you receive might not be the one you were hoping for or expecting. I also said this time I'd take a look at the power of a statement over a question. So here I am true to my word (and the fact Lee n Mick haven't sacked me yet)

Now we all know how great questions can be. Ask the right question and you'll get all the info you need...boom! The correct question at the correct time can be a powerful tool in your toolbox. But I want to give you another tool....the power of a statement.

There's a little bit of an issue with a question. And it's this...when you ask someone a question the brain sends out these tiny little bodyguards to intercept the question and it stops the question getting into the brain for a thought to come out. The little bodyguards check out the question to see if the brain needs to be careful of the answer before the question is allowed through. Now obviously this happens at super duper speed and you don't even notice....a bit like the speed of the disappearance of that bar of chocolate you opened near the kids!

Now the interesting thing is this process doesn't happen when you make a statement. The bodyguards are kept busy waiting for a question. You've by-passed the brain's security system, bravo! There's no need for the brain to think if it needs to be careful of the answer, so you are more likely to get more info.

Imagine you're in a coffee shop and you ask if they use fresh coffee beans? The response you'll likely get? 'Yes they are' or 'Yes of course' or 'Yes we use the freshest beans' etc etc. You will get your question answered. What if instead of asking a question you made a statement instead like 'I've heard you use fresh coffee beans in your coffee' What's the response you are likely to get there? Well, I'll hazard a guess that you might get 'Yes of course we use the freshest beans, we source them from a local coffee roasting company, who import them all the way from Columbia, so we know the growers get a fair price for their beans. They really know what they're doing, and our customers love our coffee.'



Actually, we've just got a fresh batch in from them today, would you like to try a sample?

Obviously, I've no idea what they'll say but I hope you get the gist. As there is no warning from the little bodyguards, the brain is much more willing to give up information. So how does this relate to us, and what we do day in day out?

Making more use of statements instead of questions might be as simple as instead of asking 'What did you do well there?' try making a statement instead... 'Seems like you did something well there'.....no pressure to get the response correct!....and the brain isn't on standby to be careful of the answer! Other examples you might want to use for various situations might be 'I noticed something different about that roundabout' 'The car felt more balanced there' 'I think the driver in front appreciates the gap you've left' These all give them the opportunity to explain what they did in more detail and the opportunity for you to agree, and this gives them a boost. You can also make negative statements to aid learning... 'The car felt a little less balanced there' Same thing happens, their awareness is raised and the responsibility is theirs to balance the car differently next time. Learning is taking place, but the really important thing here is that the responsibility for the learning is coming from them. This makes the learning happen at a deeper level so much more likely to be repeated, especially in post-test driving. After all isn't that what we are trying to do? Have a try this week and see if you notice a difference.

I'll continue with this next time and I'll look at how we can use statements to go deeper and really dig into long term behavioural change. Hope you find this useful.

If you're interested in taking your learning past your Part 3 training take a look at the link below for online and in-car training I offer.



Have a wonderful few weeks, see you next time.

TOPIC: PODCAST



FROM BEHIND THE MIC

Terry Cook is content creator and developer of the industry leading 'The Instructor Podcast'. His commitment to delivering high quality CPD content for ADIs and PDIs has seen him rapidly raise in to one of the most prominent figures in our industry. His platform continues to grow and Terry continues to add value through his widely acclaimed podcast.



**TERRY
COOK
THE INSTRUCTOR
PODCAST**

THE BEST CPD EVENT OF THE SUMMER

On Sunday, 2nd August, we launch the inaugural IPP Summit. A full day of sessions, conversations, and ideas designed to help you think differently about your development as an instructor. And we're starting with a lineup you won't find anywhere else:

- Stewart Lochrie
- Adil Amarsi
- Emma Cottingham
- The Road Safety Panel: Dr Liz Box, Dr Lisa Dorn, Prof. Gemma Briggs, and Prof. David Crundall
- Bob Morton

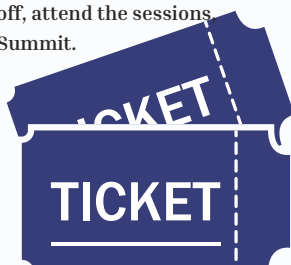
This isn't just a day of passive CPD. It's a chance to hear from people who will challenge how you think about teaching, communication, road safety, business, behaviour, and the role we play as instructors.

Interactive Tier members can register for the sessions at the bottom of this post. If you're already on the Interactive Tier, make sure you secure your place.

If you're currently on the On-Demand Tier, or you're following from the free tier, this is your chance to upgrade and be part of it live.

For as little as £22 + VAT, you can book the day off, attend the sessions, ask questions, and be part of the first-ever IPP Summit.

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SUNDAY, 2ND AUGUST 2026

11am	Stewart Lochrie
1pm	Adil Amarsi
3pm	Emma Cottingham
5pm	Road Safety Panel
7pm	Bob Morton

IPP SUMMIT 2026
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3 PM
SESSION 3
EXPLORING TRANSPERSONAL COACHING
EMMA COTTINGTON

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FOR DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

1 PM
SESSION 2
FINDING THE PROFIT IN YOUR BUSINESS
ADIL AMARSI

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FOR DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

11 AM
SESSION 1
BRIGHT IDEAS FOR BETTER LESSONS
STEWART LOCHRIE

SUNDAY, 2ND AUGUST 2026 **BOOK NOW**

FIVE LIVE CPD SESSIONS FOR GROWTH-MINDED DRIVING INSTRUCTORS
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Are We Teaching – or Creating the Conditions to Learn?

Nick Butters is an ADI with 19 years' experience and an ongoing interest in how people learn and develop. After years of working systematically, he has lived through a period of personal and professional reflection that reshaped how he understands learning and change. Through that experience, Nick has come to recognise what unboxing potential looks like at a personal level and believes that meaningful learning often requires going deep in order to extract what is simple, useful, and lasting.



NICK BUTTERS

Risk Management - From Control to Shared Awareness

I was taught to think about risk as something to manage early and reduce quickly.

Spot it. Control it. Step in before it escalates.

For a long time, that framing made sense. Driving carries real consequences, and intervention can prevent harm. Early in my career, risk management felt visible and active. Hands ready, words ready, solutions close.

And often, that approach kept everyone safe.

When Risk Stopped Looking Like Risk

But as my experience grew, risk became harder to pin down.

It stopped behaving like a checklist and started behaving more like a relationship. Something shaped continuously by the learner, the environment, the pressure within the lesson, and the changing rhythm of the drive itself.

I noticed that some of the riskiest moments in lessons weren't dramatic at all. They didn't involve late braking or obvious danger. More often, they were quiet: a learner overloaded but still compliant, a lesson that looked calm but felt brittle, or a situation where I found myself intervening early not because the learner couldn't cope, but because I felt uncomfortable waiting.

The car stayed safe. But learning narrowed. That's when I began to realise that risk isn't only technical. It's cognitive. Emotional. Situational. And it shifts constantly.

I also became more aware of how much of my risk management had moved beneath the surface. With experience, judgement becomes faster and quieter. We read developing situations earlier. We adjust position, speed, or language instinctively. From the outside, it can look like very little is happening. From the inside, a great deal is being weighed.

And in an assessed environment, that invisibility can be misleading. Not because the judgement isn't there, but because it isn't always obvious. The more I reflected on it, the more I realised that keeping people safe had never stopped being the purpose. What changed was my understanding of how that safety was often maintained. Many of the most important decisions happened long before any intervention became necessary.



The Invisible Work of Staying Safe

We often describe risk management in terms of action. Intervention. Control. Prevention. But much of effective risk management seems to live in attention. Who is carrying the thinking right now? How much processing space does the learner have? What is the environment asking of us, both physically and emotionally? Sometimes the safest decision is to intervene early. Sometimes it's to wait, watch, and stay available. Knowing the difference is the skill. Often, the earliest signs of rising risk are not visible driving faults at all. They appear as changes in pace, attention, confidence, or processing within the lesson itself.

Sharing Responsibility

We might also consider who "owns" the risk in a lesson.

When instructors manage everything, learners can remain protected but passive. When learners are exposed without support, risk can escalate quickly. Between those extremes sits shared awareness. Risk is noticed together. Decisions are shaped together. Responsibility is gradually transferred rather than abruptly handed over, with support adapting to the changing demands of both learner and environment. Yet the longer I have instructed, the harder I have found it to believe that responsibility is ever completely handed over whilst we remain in the vehicle. The learner may increasingly take ownership of decisions, but the instructor's safety awareness continues to operate in the background, constantly monitoring the changing relationship between challenge, learning, and safety. That transfer cannot be rushed, and it cannot be scripted.

Holding Safety and Learning Together

Perhaps that is one of the real challenges of risk management. Not choosing between safety and learning, but holding both at the same time. Perhaps that's why risk management feels so difficult to define. It isn't simply about eliminating danger, nor is it simply about creating learning opportunities. It is the ongoing judgement required to keep people safe whilst still allowing meaningful development to take place. That judgement creates thinking space. Thinking space for the learner to notice what matters. Thinking space for the instructor to judge when to intervene and when to hold back. Thinking space for learning to occur without the lesson becoming fragile, even if nothing obvious has yet gone wrong. When that space collapses, risk rises, even if nothing dramatic happens

THE CASE FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING BEFORE THE FIRST LESSON



BY CHRIS GREER
FOUNDER, GREER'S GEARS
AND SIMULATAYR

In the first article in this series, I raised a question that I think deserves more honest discussion within our industry. Are we starting too late? By the time a learner sits beside us for the first time, their attitudes toward speed, risk, distraction and responsibility are already taking shape. That's not an opinion. It's a pattern most experienced instructors will recognise immediately. This article is about why that happens, and what we can realistically do about it.

THE PROBLEM WITH TELLING PEOPLE WHAT NOT TO DO

There's a well-established psychological principle that most of us understand intuitively, even if we've never put a name to it. When people feel their freedom or autonomy is being restricted, they push back. Not always loudly. Sometimes quietly, privately, later. But they push back. In adolescent psychology this is called reactance theory. When a young person is told they must not speed, must not use their phone, must always wear a seatbelt, the message can produce the opposite of its intended effect. The restriction itself increases the appeal of the restricted behaviour. The rule becomes the reason.

This isn't a character flaw in young people. It's a normal developmental response. And it has significant implications for how we approach road safety education with the pre-17 cohort.

Consider what most formal road safety messaging looks like from a young person's perspective. A presentation in a school hall. A video featuring worst case outcomes. An adult in a position of authority explaining, with some urgency, what they must never do. The intention is sound. The format, however, is almost perfectly designed to trigger the response it's trying to prevent.

There's also a neurological dimension worth acknowledging. The adolescent brain is still developing, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which governs risk assessment, impulse control and long term consequence thinking. This isn't an excuse for poor decision making. It's a biological reality that should inform how we design interventions. Telling a 14 year old that a decision they'll face in three years carries serious consequences requires them to do something their brain is literally not yet fully equipped to do – weigh abstract future risk against immediate social reward.

If direct instruction and authoritarian messaging were sufficient, we'd already be seeing the results. The statistics on young driver casualties suggest otherwise.

"The restriction itself increases the appeal of the restricted behaviour. The rule becomes the reason."



THE PEER PRESSURE PROBLEM

Reactance to adult authority is only part of the picture.

Research consistently shows that peer influence is a stronger driver of adolescent risk behaviour than parental or institutional instruction. It's not primarily that young people rebel against what adults tell them, though that happens. It's that they're far more responsive to what their peers normalise.

A 15 year old doesn't get in a car with a drunk driver because they've weighed up the risk and decided it's acceptable. They get in because refusing feels socially costly. Because everyone else is getting in. Because the alternative is standing on a pavement explaining themselves.

That social calculation is rarely spoken out loud. It doesn't need to be. It operates through atmosphere, through what gets laughed at and what gets accepted without comment, through the subtle group consensus that forms around what's normal and what's an overreaction.

This is what makes peer influence so difficult to address through conventional road safety education. A talk, a leaflet, or a campaign doesn't reach into that unspoken dynamic. It addresses the individual in isolation and hopes the message survives contact with the group. It rarely does. The young person who left the school hall genuinely concerned about drink driving will walk into a situation three weeks later where the social pressure is immediate, physical and personal. The memory of a presentation is no match for that moment. What's needed isn't better messaging. It's an experience that changes the internal reference point that young person brings to that moment. Something that makes the risk feel real and personal before they ever face the social pressure to ignore it. No road safety talk in a school hall addresses that calculation. Neither does a highway code.

WHAT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OFFERS

Simulation based training works differently, and the distinction matters.

THE CASE FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING BEFORE THE FIRST LESSON



BY CHRIS GREER
FOUNDER, GREER'S GEARS
AND SIMULATAYR



Rather than telling a young person that drink driving impairs reaction time and judgment, simulation allows them to experience exactly that, safely, in a controlled environment, with no real world consequences. When combined with visual impairment tools that replicate the effects of alcohol on perception, the abstract becomes immediate and personal.

This is significant because of a well documented cognitive tendency called optimism bias. Young people, and adults, tend to believe that negative outcomes apply to others rather than themselves. It's sometimes described as the "it won't happen to me" effect, but that framing underestimates how deeply embedded it is. Optimism bias isn't a conscious decision to ignore risk. It's a default cognitive position that operates below the level of rational argument. You cannot talk someone out of it. You cannot present enough statistics to override it. It exists precisely because the brain filters incoming information through a lens that protects the individual's sense of personal invulnerability.

What you can do is give someone an experience that temporarily bypasses that filter entirely. When a young person sits in a simulator and attempts to manage a vehicle whilst their vision is compromised and their reactions are delayed, the experience is first person and immediate. It isn't happening to someone else in a video. It isn't a statistic. It's happening to them, now, and their own responses are the evidence. The gap between "I know this is dangerous" and "I have just felt what dangerous actually means" is where genuine attitude shift becomes possible.

That shift doesn't arrive fully formed. It arrives as doubt, as a crack in the certainty that they'd handle it differently, that they'd know their limit, that it wouldn't be them. That doubt is the opening a skilled facilitator can work with in the debrief conversation that follows. The experience doesn't produce attitude change on its own. What it produces is that opening, a moment where the internal narrative shifts from "that wouldn't happen to me" to something less certain, something worth examining. What happens in that moment determines whether the session has lasting value. That's where skilled facilitation and structured conversation do the real work. "The gap between 'I know this is dangerous' and 'I have just felt what dangerous actually means' is where genuine attitude shift becomes possible."

THE PEER DYNAMIC IN A GROUP SETTING

There's a further dimension worth considering, particularly when simulation is used with groups of young people rather than individuals. When a participant struggles visibly with vehicle control under simulated impairment, and their peers witness that directly, something shifts in the room. The shared experience becomes a new reference point. What they've just seen isn't abstract. It happened to someone they know, in front of them, and the evidence was unambiguous. The social script around risk doesn't get challenged by an adult telling them to reconsider. It gets challenged by the evidence in front of them, and by each other.

This is where simulation based group work has a distinct advantage over individual intervention. The peer group, which is typically the primary source of risk normalisation, becomes the audience for a different kind of evidence. The young person who laughed off the idea of impaired driving five minutes earlier has just watched a peer they respect lose control of a vehicle at modest speed with their vision compromised. The laughter tends to stop.

That shift in group atmosphere, from bravado to something more considered, is not guaranteed. It depends on how the session is structured, how the facilitator manages the dynamic, and how the debrief draws out honest reflection rather than performative responses. But when it happens, it represents something that no individual road safety intervention can easily replicate. The peer group experience becomes a shared reference point that travels with them. The conversation doesn't end when they leave the room. A facilitated debrief conversation after the simulation experience, drawing on open questioning and reflective techniques, can consolidate that shift and move it from a moment of surprise to something closer to genuine reconsideration.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR OUR INDUSTRY

As driving instructors, our professional focus is rightly on developing competent, safe drivers through structured practical tuition. That work is essential and nothing here diminishes it. But the GDE matrix, which underpins our national standard, is clear that safe driving involves more than vehicle control and hazard perception. It involves self-awareness, risk attitude, social influences and personal values.

TOPIC: PDI HELP

Ask Mia

More Information & Advice

Mia Strothers 14, died after being hit by a BMW as she walked to school on Lighbowne Road, Moston, on October 5 2020. She was killed by a driver who tested positive for cocaine and cannabis travelling at 57mph in a 30mph zone, in a BMW which he knew had faulty brakes. Mia was taken too soon, but her legacy lives on through her 'much loved' campaign raising money for The Royal Manchester Childrens Hospital, and through her helpful nature in life...She was a very kind and very loving person.



Hi Mia:

“My pupil says they already know all the theory, but they still make risky decisions. How do I bridge that gap?”

MIA:

Knowing something and doing it consistently are very different things. Rather than repeating information, explore what was happening in the moment. What did they notice? What influenced their decision? What would they want to do differently next time? Behaviour changes when learners understand themselves, not just the rules. The goal is to connect knowledge with awareness, so safer decisions become more natural.

Hi Mia:

“I’ve started using coaching questions, but my pupil just shrugs and says, ‘I don’t know.’”

MIA:

That’s completely normal, especially if they’ve spent years being given answers. Don’t rush to fill the silence. Give them time to think and, if needed, narrow the question. Instead of “What happened?”, try “What was the first thing you noticed?” or “What were you looking at just before that?” Reflection is a skill that develops with practice. The more learners think for themselves, the less they’ll rely on you to think for them.

Hi Mia:

“My pupil gets really annoyed when other drivers make mistakes. It’s affecting their own driving.”

MIA:

Strong emotions narrow attention. When frustration takes over, awareness often reduces and decision-making suffers. Rather than focusing on the other driver’s behaviour, help your pupil explore their own response. Ask, “How did feeling like that affect your driving?” They can’t control others, but they can learn to manage their own reactions. Emotional regulation is just as important as vehicle control when it comes to staying safe.

Hi Mia:

“I worry that if I’m not constantly correcting my pupil, they’ll think I’m not doing my job.”

MIA:

Good instruction isn’t measured by how many faults you identify. Sometimes the greatest value comes from helping learners recognise their own strengths and areas for development. If every lesson becomes fault-focused, confidence can suffer and dependence can grow. Aim for balance. Reinforce what they’re doing well, explore what could be improved, and encourage them to evaluate their own performance. Independent drivers are developed through independent thinking.



much loved

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Your young person may be most at risk when they are not driving

The greatest danger to your child may not be when they are behind the wheel. It may be when they are a passenger in a car driven by a friend.

What families can do:

LIFTS - keep providing lifts, especially after dark

SEAT BELTS – make seat belts non-negotiable

NO QUESTIONS ASKED – create a ‘No Questions Asked’ lift home policy

GROUP AGREEMENTS – work together with other parents in friendship group

PRACTICE SPEAKING UP – give young people the words they need to get out of situations

HAVE A BACK UP PLAN – explore other ways of travelling

NO NIGHT DRIVING – for at least 6 months

Help them pass. Help them stay safe.



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BUILD CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING UP

Practice how your young person can tackle the awkward conversations to get out of different situations. Remember, if all else fails, no one wants sick in their car so feign travel sickness.

Q1. What would your young person could say to a friend who is driving too fast?

Q2. If they noticed a friend was drinking before driving, what would they do?

Q3. How would they deal with a friend refusing to wear a seatbelt?

Q4. If their driver used their phone, what would you do?

FAMILY AGREEMENT

We agree that if a journey feels unsafe, our young person can call us at any time for a lift home. No judgement. No consequences. Just support.



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THE E-MAG THAT KEEPS INSPIRING
TODAYS INSTRUCTORS

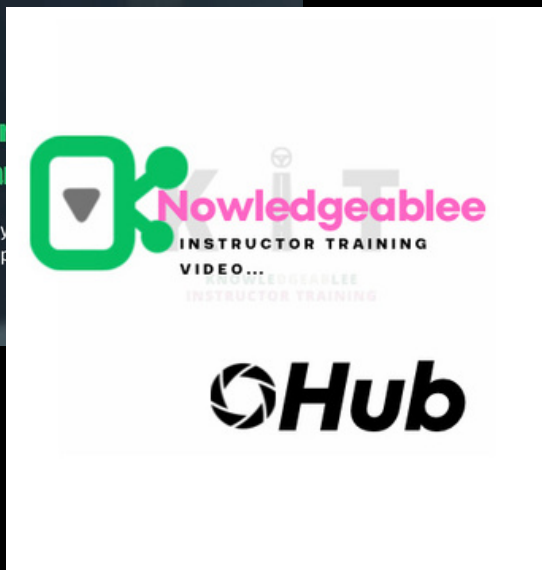
My Learner Driver®

PROTECT
YOUNG DRIVERS

Time for change

24% of fatal or serious injuries in
Britain involve 17 to 24-year-olds

Young drivers are at high risk - but tragedy can be avoided with the right support and safeguards, we can protect lives and families torn apart. It's time to act.



We're Back in August...