

## Back Seat Driving Versus Teamwork

**The secret is out.** I'm a back seat driver. When my husband drives, I catch my breath, slam on my invisible breaks, and issue "words of warning" while he's trying to navigate traffic. Funny thing, no matter how I try to control him it never works!

**It dawned on me that I was never a back seat driver until I learned how to drive.** In fact, I don't ever recall slamming on invisible breaks or advising my mom about turning on her blinker when I was ten years old. My habit of back seat driving happened after I became a skilled driver.

**So what does this mean** to you and your workplace?

**Being a back seat driver translates into being a control freak** and being a control freak is a character quality that inhibits teamwork.

**When you know a skill it's difficult not to micromanage.** When you train someone else on a job at which you are proficient, it's difficult to be patient.

**When you get promoted you may have to supervise others** who are now in charge of doing a job you once performed. (It's difficult not to take over just this once.)

**Your trainee's challenge is to gain proficiency and increase their skills.** Your challenge is to let them do their job instead of micromanaging.

**The same rules hold true for co-workers who share responsibilities.** Sometimes you are the driver and sometimes you are the passenger. It takes a good driver and a good passenger to create a pleasant and productive trip.

**To curb my "control tendencies"** I took lessons at the local improvisational comedy club called "The Skinny Improv."

**One of the rules of Improv is to make your team members look good.** You do exercises that help you learn the rules of agreement and how to support your partners so that they can perform. In Improv, it's not all about you. It's about the team effort.

**In order to create a team effort,** you must be willing to leave the comfort zone and take the risk and you must always consider the other members. This means you must develop trust and connection. Whether you are the driver or the passenger, trust and connectivity makes for a smoother trip.

**Points to Ponder:** In your particular job, when are you the driver and when are you the passenger? What can you do to be a better driver? What can you do to be a supportive passenger?