

Weekly Lesson

DRIVE FRIENDLY

Our words and actions are the vehicle we use to communicate our feelings. When our thoughts are destructive and our feelings are volcanic, we become emotionally violent. We speak and act in ways that are harsh and hurtful. The blame and shame games begin. Relationship interactions feel like emotional bumper cars between agitated and aggressive drivers. We over-react and skid out and slam into one another. We become “defensive drivers” on the critical lookout for how others are driving their emotional cars. We judge their actions and believe we can drive their cars better. Their driving offends us. We keep a record of it. We retaliate with aggressive (or passive aggressive) behavior. We back another driver into a corner. We gang up on someone. We make demands. Unhappy drivers drive in unfriendly ways. We also harm ourselves when we drive our emotional cars violently. We dangerously mishandle our emotional lives. We act selfish, careless, reckless, and impulsive. Others are afraid to be near us when we are out of control. Emotional bumper cars is not fun for anyone.

On the other hand, when we follow emotional driving rules and establish healthy boundaries, we interact in safe, healthy, and kind ways. Let’s share the road and drive our emotional cars in friendly ways. When we turn our destructive thoughts around and process our volcanic feelings, we can be respectful, encouraging, responsive, and supportive drivers. Remember, each person is in charge of his or her own emotional vehicle. We can only drive one emotional car: *ours*. Being responsible for *our* actions and *our* feelings makes everyone in charge of his or her own emotional vehicle. How you drive is up to you. And, if you are a peace-keeping type of person, you may be tempted to take on the impossible job of traffic cop. Don’t. It is likely that the bumper cars will just slam into you and leave you wounded on the sideline. Your time and energy are better invested in learning to remain detached from aggressive emotional drivers and practice learning how to drive friendly.

Apply these road signs to your emotional driving experience: Slow Down. Stop. Yield. Drive Like Your Children Live Here. Caution. Dead End. Wrong Way. No Crossing. Do Not Enter. Construction Ahead. Detour. Private Property- No Trespassing. Keep A Safe Distance. No Passing. Keep Your Eyes On The Road. Drive Sober.

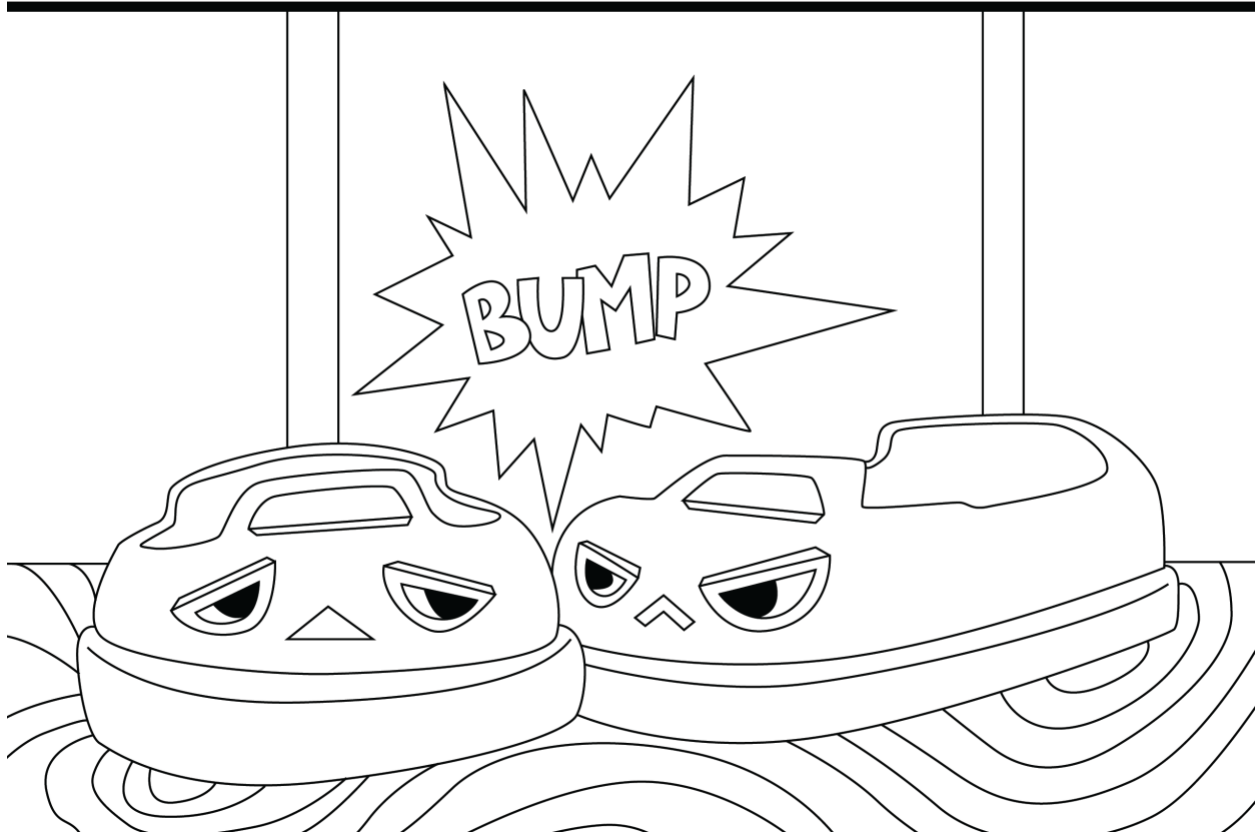
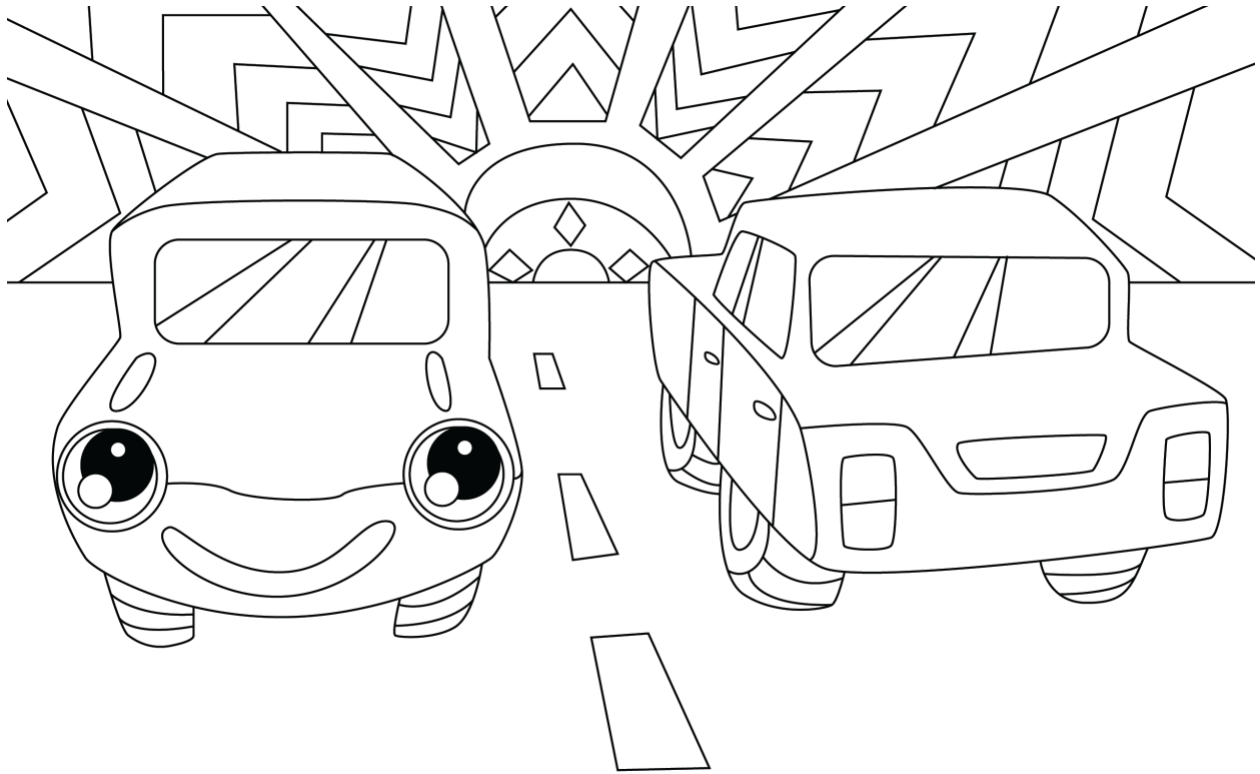
PERSONALIZE THIS LESSON

Think: I choose emotional non-violence. I choose to drive friendly. I choose non-aggression. I will not hurt another person with my emotions. Each person deserves respect. I want safe relationships. I will be a safe person to other people. I accept others to make their own choices. Goodbye sarcasm. Goodbye emotional bumper cars.

Feel: I feel friendly. I feel in charge of my emotional vehicle. I feel safe, alert, and attentive.

Do: Stop judging, criticizing, keeping score, being sarcastic, or reacting in violent ways. Choose to honor and respect boundaries. Allow each person to drive his or her own emotional car.

Memorize: Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him (Proverbs 26:27).



WEEKLY LESSON: DRIVE FRIENDLY

Describe your experience with emotional bumper cars. Are you a defensive driver, an aggressive driver, a relationship traffic cop, or a casualty of an emotional car crash?

Choose a road sign (example: slow down) and express how it might help you to drive friendly this week.

Write out a personal commitment statement to choosing emotional non-violence.

How can emotional boundaries improve the dynamics in your home this week?

Suggested Song: “Love God. Love People.” By Danny Gokey (Haven’t Seen It Yet, 2019, Sparrow Records)
