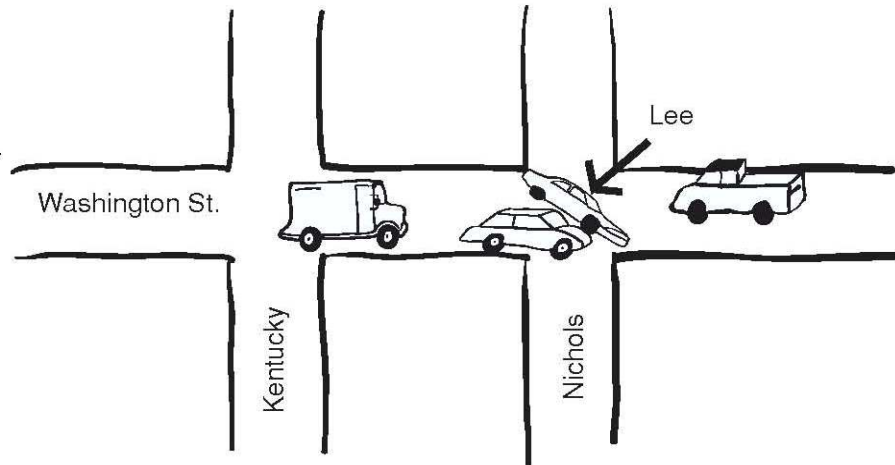


Could This Collision Have Been Prevented?

Faulty Assumption

Turning left onto Washington Street was always a challenge. Lee was at a stop sign, so he had to yield right-of-way to traffic on Washington Street. Often Lee would go right, then do a U-turn at the next light. But this time he was in a hurry, and there was a gap in the traffic from the right, and only one car, signaling to turn right, from the left.

Lee pulled out quickly, to catch the gap in the traffic. Inexplicably, instead of turning, the car from the left plowed right into Lee, catching his left rear fender and spinning his vehicle completely around.



1. Both drivers made errors here. What were they?

2. Can you think of other situations where making assumptions might get you in trouble? _____

3. Good judgment is an important characteristic of defensive driving. What might have caused Lee's lapse in judgment? _____

Answers:

1. The driver of the other car forgot to turn off her turn signal when she decided not to turn. Lee forgot an important rule of defensive driving: Never assume a vehicle is going to stop, slow or turn until it does. He should have waited until the other vehicle was beginning its turn or had passed by.
2. You can also get into trouble by assuming cross traffic will stop at an intersection where you have the right-of-way, especially just after the light turns green. It's dangerous to assume there's no one behind you when you back up. Never assume there's no obstacle just out of sight around a curve or over a hill.
3. Lee was in a hurry and that affected his judgment. We'd all be safer on the road if we allowed a little extra time to get to our destinations.

