



Avoid a car accident

Keep friends with friends who divorce

They loved each other. You loved them both. Now they hate each other. But you don't. Remember the scene in *The Ten Commandments* where Charlton Heston leads a crowd of Hollywood extras through the Red Sea? Remember what happened to the Pharaoh's chariots hot on his heels? You get to choose: you can be Moses. Or you can be the chariots.

> THE BASICS

1. See no evil.
2. Hear no evil.
3. Speak no evil.

> THE DETAILS

Clinical psychologist and Internet counsellor Michele Carelse has this to say about dealing with friends who are splitting up:

Try not to take sides This is easier said than done. As Carelse points out, "When two people are splitting up, they will often try to create a battle zone of their friends and family – with each one trying to recruit as many people into their camp as possible."

Stay out of the crossfire Do not try to be the peacemaker. When two people start shooting and you're in the middle, they may survive, but you won't. Remember that the situation between two people who are splitting up is volatile and can go from hatred to friendship and back overnight. Carelse advises friends to show concern and a willingness to listen, but not to become involved in the conflict zone or to play therapist. "If one of your friends seems to be completely losing it, refer him or her to a therapist and leave the tricky work up to the professionals."

If there's one guy in the world you don't want to run into, it's the guy piloting that bulleting vehicle across the middle lane and coming at you. Head-ons kill hundreds of South Africans every year. So if you want to avoid being the kudu in somebody's headlights, follow the rules.

> THE BASICS

1. Quick! Swerve left!
2. Rear-ends are better than head-ons...
3. Buckle up.
4. Don't speed.

> THE DETAILS

Johan Jonck and the development team of www.arrivealive.co.za explain a few things:

Light up Drive with headlights on during the day. In the US this has cut daytime two-vehicle collisions by 30 percent. In South Africa 37 percent of fatalities are pedestrians. In future it might be required to have daytime driving lights that come on automatically when you turn on the ignition.

No skidding Take your foot off the brake and steer away from trouble. At speeds above 55km/h, it takes longer to stop a car than to successfully steer around something. The average driver is a much better steerer than braker. Advanced driving courses will help with the technique required for emergency steering and braking.

Left-hand drive Generally, it's safer to veer to the left to avoid a collision. Your odds are better that way, since the other guy is more likely to steer to his left.

Straight ahead If you must hit another car, hit one that is moving in the same direction as yours is. The crash will be far less messy.

Ricochet If you have to hit something stationary, like a tree, try to hit it with a glancing blow rather than head on.

In the harness Wearing your seatbelt is one of the best ways to prevent a crash because it keeps you behind the wheel in a position to make evasive manoeuvres.

Try to offer practical support rather than advice Your friends need to work this one out by themselves. Offer to babysit, walk the dog or house-sit if that will help.

Avoid exclusions Even though they may no longer fit into your 'couple crowd', don't leave them out of social arrangements just because it's awkward. Going through a divorce can be lonely and they'll need your support and friendship.

Be absolutely neutral, always If you can't maintain your neutrality resign yourself to having to choose sides – and losing a friend.