

Split-Second Decisions We Make

Many years ago Brion was visiting the San Francisco area. While there, he wanted to see the Golden Gate Bridge from a vantage point that was on the other side of a heavily traveled highway which had multiple lanes of traffic going in both directions. He stood and analyzed whether or not he could make his way across the highway on foot? Brion didn't want to have to drive away and find an exit where he could return to the other side. He couldn't believe how much traffic there was but decided to risk running across the highway. He was young, athletic and single at the time.

The goal was across the highway, i.e., a great view of the bridge and the immediate area, and Brion was determined to get there. He was focused on what he needed to do. He watched the traffic going back and forth and then made a split-second decision to dash across one direction of the traffic when there was a brief lull. He got to a narrow median. It became immediately obvious to Brion that he was standing dangerously close to traffic moving very fast in both directions. Twice someone passing by honked their horn excessively at Brion which was startling and reinforced the fact that he had put himself in a dangerous place. He is sure they probably thought that he was some drunk fool standing in the middle of a highway with no where to go.

Being pinned down like that, by his own action, was not a good feeling . . . Nearly five minutes went by before Brion saw a brief opportunity to race across the other lanes of traffic. He had made it to the other side but at what risk? When your heartbeat is elevated and you are in danger adrenaline is pumping out in the fight or flight scenario. Brion freely admits that he was foolish to do what he had done and he felt even more foolish that day when he later saw a pedestrian tunnel that passes under the highway which he would later use to get back to the side where he had parked his vehicle. Impulse can be a dangerous thing . . .

On the one hand you could say that Brion only put himself at risk in this situation; however, what if he had started to cross the highway and his judgment was wrong and cars had to slam on their brakes? Brion very well could have been the causative factor for a chain-reaction accident that resulted in other people being injured or killed. He was fortunate or lucky, call it what you will, that day because neither he nor anyone else got hurt. Regarding split-second decisions it was a lesson that Brion never forgot.