More Than Speed — A Preview

Why you lose access to what you already know—and how to get it back

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And in that moment, I could not access it.

The braking marker for Turn 5 at Road America had been rushing toward me at 160 miles per hour. I was strapped into my Corvette, the humidity of a Wisconsin summer coming through the open windows, a competitor close enough behind me that I could hear his engine over mine.

I had run this sequence hundreds of times. Downshift. Threshold brake. Turn in.

My hands knew what to do.

My foot hesitated.

Just enough.

I hit the brake too hard trying to catch it. The front tires protested. The car pushed wide. The apex disappeared, ten feet to my left.

The car behind came through as we climbed toward the bridge.

Nothing about the track had changed.

Nothing about the car had changed.

The system had.

That gap between what you know and what you can do when it counts is what this book is built to close.

The Real Problem

That gap has a structure:

Performance = Capability × Availability

If either variable goes to zero, performance goes with it.

Capability is everything you have built. Technique. Pattern recognition. The thousands of small corrections that have become instinct.

Availability is whether you can reach it when the run starts.

High capability with low availability still produces poor performance. You cannot out-skill an access problem.

Most drivers try anyway.

They push harder. They focus more. They add effort.

Effort consumes the same capacity you are already running short of. The harder you try, the less access you have.

That is the trap.

The Constraint

Availability is not unlimited.

Every run draws from the same finite capacity. Speed. Decision-making. Visual processing. Pressure. Internal noise. All of it from the same pool.

When demand stays below capacity, things feel clean. Vision stays forward. Inputs stay smooth. The car feels predictable.

When demand approaches the limit, things tighten. Time compresses. Corrections start to appear.

When demand exceeds it, performance does not fade.

It breaks.

Vision collapses inward. You react instead of direct. The car arrives faster than you can manage.

Not because the car changed. Because the system did.

What This Book Builds

Capability and availability are not the same problem. They do not have the same diagnosis and they do not have the same fix.

This book builds both.

The capability content teaches you how to see, how to read the car, how to apply technique with precision under load. The availability content teaches you how to keep the system open, how to recognize when it is closing, and how to restore access quickly.

The fastest drivers are not just better at driving.

They are better at accessing what they already have. Consistently. Under pressure.

Speed Begins Where You Look

Every input you make — brake, steering, throttle — is a response to what your eyes already sent to your brain. The hands do not lead the car. The feet do not lead the car. The eyes lead everything.

When your vision is locked on the correct target, your brain calculates what the car needs next without you asking it to. When your vision is poor, your brain guesses. Most reactive driving is the consequence of that guessing. The frantic steering corrections, the stabbing brakes, the constant scramble — that is a brain solving for surprises it should have seen coming.

The most common mistake in amateur motorsports is low vision. New drivers, overwhelmed by the sensory intensity of a live track, pull their focus in close. They look at the cone they are currently passing. The apex they are currently clipping. The patch of pavement ten feet ahead of the bumper.

The closer you look, the faster the world appears to move.

That perception drives heart rate up, tension up, load toward saturation. And because you are looking at the present, you are always behind it. By the time you process the mistake, the moment to fix it has passed. You overcorrect. The tires get shocked. The momentum disappears.

Extending your focal point creates time.

A driver looking 30 feet ahead has roughly half a second to respond to a change in grip. A driver looking 200 feet ahead has three seconds. That gap is the difference between reacting and directing.

The Physics You're Driving Inside

Grip is not a fixed number. It follows load.

More load generally means more grip, but not proportionally, and not past the optimal range. Push past it and grip starts to fall away. The steering gets light. The front floats rather than bites.

Every input is a load decision.

Brake too abruptly and you shock the front tires with load they were not ready for. Get back to throttle too quickly after turn-in, and you unload the front tires and overwhelm the rear tires before they have finished their cornering job.

Smoothness is not about style. It is the controlled management of load.

When inputs are progressive, the suspension can transfer load cleanly and the tires stay within their working range. When inputs are abrupt, load spikes faster than the suspension can manage, and the tires are pushed past their limit. Grip falls away.

That is the mechanism.

Physics, not discipline.

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Audit

Use this after any run, session, or high-pressure moment.

Capability

- Did I know what to do in that moment?
- Were the correct actions already within my skill set?

Availability

- Where did access break down?
- Was vision running automatically, or were you consciously reminding yourself to look further ahead?
- Were you managing weight transfer consciously or automatically?

Diagnosis

- Was this a skill problem — or an access problem?
- What was the first signal that the system was closing?

Try This at Your Next Autocross Event

Note: More Than Speed includes focused instruction for Autocross, Track Days & Time Trials, and Multi-Segment Events like Optima Search for the Ultimate Streetcar and LS Fest. The content below focuses solely on Autocross.

Vision

On your first course walk, identify one exit landmark per corner — a cone, a crack in the pavement, a patch of rubber — and commit to finding it with your eyes before your car reaches the apex. Notice whether the corner feels slower when you do.

On your second run, pick one section of the course and consciously push your focal vision to the next corner while you are still managing the current one. Notice whether your hands get quieter.

Encoding

In your first run, pick one transition — either braking to corner entry, or apex to throttle — and slow that transition down by a full count. Notice whether the car feels more or less settled through the rest of the corner.

After your final run, ask yourself which corners felt like surprises and which felt like decisions. The surprises are where your vision dropped. Those are your encoding targets for next time.

Core Reminder

You don't rise to your capability.

You perform at the level you can access.

If you've ever had a moment where you knew you had more in it — but couldn't quite get there — this is the problem *More Than Speed* is built to solve.

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