

Receiving the card with my smiling face plastered on the front was a moment I will never forget. That card called a driver's license represented my freedom to travel wherever I wanted. It was the biggest step toward adulthood I had taken thus far, and I was excited about all the opportunities. However, with great freedom comes great responsibility, and safe driving is essential to ensure that this freedom remains liberating and joyful.

I, like so many teenagers, had to learn my lesson the hard way. Thankfully, it was on a small scale. I knew the rules of no cell phone and driving, but I was in a parking lot barely moving so I became complacent. While trying to call my mom to figure out what soccer field my sister was playing on I veered off the road and scraped my car into a construction fence. I whipped my head back up, but not before I broke my parking sensor and damaged the front vent. I quickly popped my mirror back out and examined the excruciating scrapes I heard on the side which ended up being more the fence making noise. I made it out without any real damage to myself, my car, or most importantly others. That is all it took for me to learn, no phone or message is worth permanent damage. This one small instance illustrated how overconfidence that leads to distraction causes accidents. When an individual decides that they are skilled enough to forgo safety precautions, they miscalculate simple human error. Whether that is driving intoxicated, not double-checking before turning, running red lights, or texting, they can all end the same. Furthermore, once these mistakes happen, there is no reversal to retrieve someone's life.

I was once again reminded of the precariousness of someone's life when my close friend since the sixth grade was hit by an eighteen-wheeler last semester. Her car was pushed for 100 feet and the back seat was completely pushed in. If she had any passengers in the backseat the authorities told her they would have died. Thankfully, all her injuries healed and now it feels like a bad dream, but was a grim reminder for me and my classmates of the dangers of driving and the importance of remaining diligent. Simply being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Therefore since accidents can be caused by any other driver's mistake or natural causes like weather, it is important to lower the odds and not add personal negligence to the list of possible dangers.

Driving is a wonderful skill that aids humans in their goals. However, it does not need to become a mundane task because we complete it everyday, safety and driving with our full attention on the road needs to be a priority every time we step behind the wheel. That is why anytime riding with friends or family I assume the front seat role as navigator, DJ, and communicator because no one's entire life is worth a moment.