

Mallory Bowin

Learning how to drive was thrilling and nervewracking at the same time. It was thrilling because I finally felt like I was taking a huge step forward in the process of growing up. On the other hand, my nerves often couldn't handle having one of my parents in the passenger seat beside me. As nervous as I was, they were even more nervous. I mean, I get it. It can be scary when it seems like I was taking too long to press the brake, but what I needed was a calming but firm demeanor, not my mom gasping and grabbing the door handle. This is why I think driver's ed should still be in schools today.

So many times my parents told me about their experiences in drivers ed. Each of them were taught by a coach at their school. They each drove with classmates in the car. That added pressure alone would make me take driving more seriously. Can you imagine being the kid that everyone made fun of because they nearly hit something? Peer pressure is a great motivator. Plus, drivers ed instructors have got to have nerves of steel. Once, my mother was letting me drive, this time further than I had before, yet it was all ruined when I dodged a turtle in the road. The car swerved a bit, but the worse was my mother screaming "Just hit the turtle!" What came next was a lecture about a turtle's life was not worth losing my own. That is true, but she had me so frazzled that I just sat looking silently at the road while the tears came. She then tried to apologize and tell me I did a good job of recovering, but the damage was done. At that moment, I never wanted to drive again, and I also realized that my learning to drive was just as hard on my parents. A combination of not trusting your child and worrying about your child's safety and all the what ifs leave parents in a difficult situation which means they are not the best driving instructors.

What kids learning to drive really need is an instructor with no personal feelings, someone who can tell you the truth, who can firmly correct without yelling. At home driving instruction can often be done too casually, or some I fear not at all. A true drivers' education course would force students to see driving as a major responsibility and step into adult life. It is something to be taken just as seriously as passing Algebra II. It is a rite of passage.