

Fight the Urge

Boom. Crash. With approximately 5.25 million car accidents a year, this sound is way too familiar. While the reasons for these traumatizing accidents vary, one specific cause stands out, as it has climbed its way to the top of prevalent issues of today's society: texting and driving. The devices that most people depend on daily are the same devices to blame for over 330,000 accidents and 421,000 deaths per year. So why not just set the phone down? Specifically for teens, a generation so emotionally and physically attached to their phones, this statement has proven to be easier said than done. According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, nearly half of teens who drive admit to the wrong-doing, not to mention the others who are ashamed to say so. Although 46 states currently have laws against texting and driving, families still find themselves grieving losses of loved ones due to accidents involving distraction. We, as a people, need a solution to this problem, and in a timely manner.

There is no denying that teens should not worry about their phones while they are seated behind the wheel. A text to a friend can wait until the car is turned off. While some believe that alternative handsfree options can be used to send texts more safely, research shows that those options are just as dangerous. Here, the problem revolves around the fact that the driver's attention is focussed on the phone, rather than the road, which should be the only priority while one is in control of a car. After all, scientific research has proven that by glancing at a phone while driving, the driver drives the length of a football field, 360 feet without looking at the road.

I believe the only way to resonate with teens on the issue of texting and driving is to provide them with real life stories. I would persuade Drivers Ed schools to dedicate time to heartfelt videos of texting and driving victims, increasing the chances of the students connecting to them. For me, a specific video from ItCanWait is what I give credit to for my decision to never text and drive. The 4 minute video includes 8 high schoolers talking about how they often text and drive or send snapchats to people. After seeing teens who remind me of myself or my friends in the way they talk and react, the producers introduce a young woman who shares her story, and how she was 21 when she and her family were hit by someone who was texting and driving. None of the kids have a dry eye after meeting her. They cry as this beautiful young woman, now half of her body paralyzed, shares how she lost both of her parents that day, almost dying herself. At the end, all of the teens share through their tears that they will never text and drive again. The fact that they are teens who dress, talk, and look like someone who could be my classmate really connected with me, and I believe any teenager watching this video would feel the story on a personal level. I strongly believe that personal and real stories like these need to be shown to teenagers at Drivers Ed classes, helping to make lasting impressions on them, eliminating their urge to text and drive. I thank ItCanWait for doing that for me, as I can honestly and proudly say that I will never text and drive. Next time you have the urge, fight it. The text can wait.

Works Cited

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