Being able to drive is both a privilege and freedom that I’ve looked forward to having for many years. When I was a lot younger, I wanted to drive because it looked like fun. As I got closer to my sixteenth birthday, I was eager to get my license because it was a sign of my maturation and self-reliance. Now that I’ve been driving for two years, and have my full license, I know that driving is not only a fun way to be independent or further proof of my adultness. Driving is a major responsibility that should never be taken for granted or carried out with anything less caution.

Even before I started driving, I knew the dangers of texting behind the wheel. At school, we were taught the consequences of texting and driving and were encouraged to remind our parents of the potentially fatal repercussions of doing so. My parents do not use their phones while driving very often, but I can remember one time when I was quite young where I had to remind my dad not to text while driving. I remember thinking “hey! this is my chance to teach my dad something I learned at school”. I was very proud of myself for telling him that texting and driving could cause an accident. My dad told me that of course, I was right and that it was a terrible habit I should never pick up when it was time for me to drive. This lesson has stuck with me for all these years and I am often reminded of my younger self’s warning when I get behind the wheel.

When I first started driving I was very nervous and mindful of every single driving rule down to the letter. I would turn my phone off and forget about it completely until I arrived at my destination. As I’ve gotten more comfortable with driving, I am more lax with the rules and can admit that I am often tempted to use my phone. Somewhere in my unconscious mind, I am well aware of how it only takes one second for a disaster to occur on the road. But I naively think “that won’t happen to me” or “I’m only looking for a second, it’ll be okay”.

I’m sure most of my friends share a similar mindset as me when it comes to texting and driving. We know the dangers, but no one actually thinks it will happen to them until it does. Driving with friends is a distraction in itself without phones in the picture. I am always more aware of my driving with my parents because I know they can take the privilege away from me in a second.

Unfortunately, I do know a few people who have been seriously injured and even killed in car accidents, but I am unsure if any were the result of texting and driving. The loss of someone close to you is a terrible, jarring experience, even more so when you realize that it easily could have been you in their place. Deaths caused by texting and driving are so easily preventable, making them even more upsetting. I think that the best way to avoid any more of these needless tragedies is to really instil the ramifications. Fines and demerits are also effective means of dissuading people from texting behind the wheel, but I think they just make people more creative in how they go about using their phones on the road.

I believe the most effective way to prevent young people from texting and driving is to show them stories of people who have been directly impacted by it. Real life stories would implant a serious warning in peoples’ minds whenever they thought about using their phones at the wheel. I also think it would be beneficial for people to experience a virtual simulation that shows what can really happen when you text and drive. As harsh as some may consider these measures, it would assuredly get the message across.

As technology advances, more and more people are using their mobile devices at the wheel. It's becoming a serious hazard that society seems to have become desensitized to. Since I was a little girl I’ve known that texting and driving is dangerous and not something to be toyed with. While I do value my own life, it is admittedly very easy to forget how quickly accidents can happen and to let myself be distracted by my phone.