

Distracted Driving Essay

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It was a normal day—until it wasn't. On October 5th, 2024, I experienced a life-changing moment that forever altered my perspective on distracted driving. I was on my way to babysit, taking my usual route—a single-lane street out in the country with a 55mph speed limit. Quite far ahead, I saw a white car coming from the opposite direction speeding. Then I saw the car swerve but quickly return to its lane. The unthinkable happened next. That car swerved again, but this time into my lane. In that flash of a second when I saw the car heading directly toward me, I thought I was about to die. I thought of every person I loved and every plan I had made for the future. The car slammed into mine head-on, sending both vehicles spinning out of control. I was traveling at 55 mph, and the other driver was speeding at 70 mph. The force of the impact felt like a wave of terror, the kind of impact I only thought happened in movies. I screamed for what seemed like forever, my body in shock, fully convinced I had died. Then, a voice broke through the silence—someone on my Bluetooth speaker, a 911 operator, asking if I was okay.

The next few moments felt surreal. I was disoriented, my heart pounding, and my mind struggling to make sense of the chaos. Slowly, I regained full awareness of what had happened. I realized I was still alive, and in the strangest way, that was even scarier than the accident itself. I managed to find a way out of my car, miraculously walking away with just a broken pinky and a few bruises. But the emotional and psychological impact of that moment has stayed with me. Not a single day goes by without replaying the crash in my mind—every detail, every sound, every

moment of terror. I still hear the screech of the tires, the deafening crash, and the overwhelming feeling of losing control.

Later, I learned that the cause of the crash was an argument between the couple in the other car. It was a simple moment of distraction—a quarrel that lasted only a few minutes—but it almost cost both of us our lives. That realization hit me hard. What could have been an innocent disagreement led to a catastrophic event. Distracted driving doesn't always involve texting or looking at your phone—it can come from anything that pulls a driver's attention away from the road, even for a fraction of a second. Daydreaming, arguing, or adjusting the radio are all distractions that can have deadly consequences. The fact that a brief argument could have such a massive impact on both our lives made me realize how fragile life is and how quickly things can change.

Before the accident, I thought I was a safe driver. Like many other young drivers, I was confident, maybe even overconfident, thinking I had everything under control. I had never really thought much about distracted driving or how something as simple as a distraction could lead to a tragedy. But now, my outlook has completely changed. I am acutely aware of the risks every time I get behind the wheel. The memory of that crash—the sound of the impact and the feeling of losing control—is still so vivid in my mind. It's something I carry with me every day, and it's made me think more deeply about my driving habits. I know now that driving isn't just about being in control of the car—it's about being responsible, paying attention, and understanding the weight of that responsibility. Even a momentary lapse in concentration can have devastating consequences.

Distracted driving is a threat that affects us all, and it's something that should never be taken lightly. It's not just about the person who is distracted—it's about the other drivers, passengers, and pedestrians who could all be impacted by a moment of inattention. I've learned that even the most minor distraction can have devastating consequences, and that awareness has made me a much more cautious driver. I will never forget that day, and I will never stop spreading the message about the dangers of distracted driving. No one should ever experience the kind of fear and pain that I did, and I want to help prevent others from facing that reality.

To raise awareness about distracted driving, I would create a campaign targeting young drivers by sharing real-life stories, like mine, to show how a moment of distraction can change a life. I would visit schools to host workshops and assemblies where students can learn about safe driving habits and hear from survivors or law enforcement about real-world consequences. Realizing that many young drivers often feel invincible, I would focus on delivering the message in a way that resonates emotionally, showing how one moment of distraction can alter lives forever.

Social media would play a crucial role in spreading the message. I would run targeted ads and campaigns on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, using short, impactful videos to highlight the dangers of distracted driving. Hashtags like #EyesOnTheRoad and #DriveSafe would encourage young drivers to share their commitment to distraction-free driving. Social media challenges, like the "No Distractions Challenge," would motivate young drivers to stay focused behind the wheel, with incentives like prizes or recognition. By leveraging these platforms, I hope to reach young drivers where they are most engaged and make the message more relatable and impactful.

By combining school visits, assemblies, and social media campaigns, this initiative would reach a wide audience, encouraging safer driving habits and preventing accidents caused by distractions. With this campaign, I aim to create a culture of accountability and mindfulness, where drivers understand the full weight of their actions behind the wheel. This is my commitment to preventing others from experiencing the fear and pain I felt, and to promoting a safer driving culture for everyone. I was lucky in my experience, but I am in the minority with that sentence. Distracted driving needs to end.