

Growing up, I had the best childhood that any kid could imagine. I had my little sister and two cousins that lived right down the road. We all grew up outside every chance we had; we spent most of our time playing with animals or at our grandfather's farm. We lived in Lincoln County in southern West Virginia. The small town in which we resided was like our own little world and we didn't need to go anywhere else. Around the age of 8, my parents decided to get a divorce, and my sister and I were broken hearted. My mother is the most caring person I have ever met so we knew that she thought it was best. She grew up in Grafton, West Virginia, so when it was time to relocate, she brought us to her home. I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the time and my little sister was in 3<sup>rd</sup>, and we were terrified. Not only were we leaving our home and all of our friends and family, we were moving to a place where we did not know anyone. Over time, the new town grew familiar and our memories of Lincoln County began to fade.

A few years after the big move, my mom started to date a man who she knew from high school. His name is Rick. After he graduated from high school in Grafton, he moved back to Akron, Ohio to where he was from and had two boys, Zack and Logan. As our families spent more time together, they started to feel like real brothers who I have known my whole life. On June 27, 2016 Rick and my mom got married. Not only did I get an amazing stepfather, but two amazing stepbrothers. Zack is a senior at Alderson Broaddus and after deciding to move to Grafton for his senior year, Logan graduated high school in 2016. During his senior year, Logan and I grew very close. He drove me to after school activities and I helped him with his homework. He quickly became one of the most important and influential people in my life. I looked up to him and always wished that I could have the courage and contagious personality that he did.

After a long and frigid December day with my family in 2017, we finally came home from our day out and I was so excited to go to sleep. I curled up in my warm bed and peacefully went to sleep. As I awoke the next day, my stepfather was gone. He usually wakes up much earlier than anyone else and runs to get us breakfast. I asked my mom where he went, and she told me that he was at the hospital. Immediately, I was terrified and asking dozens of questions. She explained to me that Logan was in a terrible wreck on his way home earlier that morning from Morgantown. He claimed to have looked down at his phone to change a song for a split second and when we looked up, he slipped on ice going around a turn. He rolled his truck three times down a hill until finally hitting a guard rail and stopping on its side. Logan was luckily okay, but he had to kick his door out and climb out in fear of another vehicle following behind him. He made it out with only a couple bumps and bruises. His truck did not make it out as lucky, though. It was completely totaled.

My family spent weeks on weeks looking for a new truck for Logan because he no longer lived with us and needed a vehicle to travel to and from his job. Although my parents were trying to help him, he was still frightened of the road. Months after the accident, my family used to joke with him about it attempting to lighten the subject. Despite his joking personality, Logan wanted no part in the jokes. He would stop us immediately, especially my sister and I, and explain to us how serious and terrifying the event was for him. At the time, I had just turned fifteen, so he took advantage of my age and explained to me the importance of safe driving, knowing that I had recently received my learners permit. His seriousness deeply affected me. After watching someone constantly laughing and joking and having fun, their sincerity is deeply affecting. I knew before how dangerous vehicles can be, and Logan's experience heightened that knowledge.

All through school, students see guest speakers visit to talk about safe driving, drugs, alcohol, etc. Most students attend because they are forced to or just to get out of classes. I have personally witnessed multiple students laugh and roll their eyes at these visitors. Those kids do not understand the importance of the stories until they have been through it themselves. The students in the assemblies that have experienced the events usually have to leave because they remember pain that came along with the memories.

There are copious amounts of reasons for vehicle accidents; however, the first one is just as tragic as the last. One of the largest rising causes of accidents is the use of cellphones while driving. Researchers and car manufacturers have come up with solutions to the problem but very few seem to help. There are slots to sit phones in the middle of the dashboards, devices to hook a phone to on the windshield, and even a Bluetooth system so one can speak commands to the phone without having to touch it. Despite the solutions, people still find the need to text, call, and even search through social media. The real solution is simple: do not touch the phone. Keep it away. Think about the friend and family who love and care about you. Think about the plans for your future and how important they have been to you. No text or call is important enough to risk your life. Researchers give statistics and advanced solutions to the problems that they see fit to help but the reality is that stuff is only numbers. Thinking about family and those who truly care about you is the only way to really convince someone to keep the phone out of sight.