

Mackenzie Young
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Arrive Alive

It was 2:40pm, on a mid summers afternoon, and I was on my way to work. My day was going pretty well but I could feel a headache coming on, so I turned down my music in my car. Then I remember that I had some Advil in my bag. As I looked back and forth from the road to my bag which was sitting on the passenger side floor, I decided I was going to get the Advil. I always look down at my phone to text someone or to change the music, how is this any different? I gripped the steering wheel to try to keep it steady while I fumbled around in my bag. A couple of seconds went by and I found the bottle of Advil. As I got back up to look at the road I saw that I had crossed over the centerline just a little bit, but quickly got the car back on the right side of the road. Thank goodness there wasn't a car coming.

I kept driving to work. I was about 8 minutes away when I got a text from my friend Kelsey. Kelsey and I work at the movie theater together and we were both working the same shift this afternoon. I picked up my phone and saw that she texted me "Are u almost here?". I glanced up quickly at the road and saw a car coming towards me but was half a mile away. I then looked back down at my phone to respond, "almost t-" at this point I felt my car drift toward the center line. Without looking up I then started to drift the car to the right to get it back to where it was before. After finishing my text "almost there." to Kelsey, I hit send. I quickly looked at my speedometer seeing I was going 50 mph. Then I looked up to the road and I saw a person riding a bike right in front of me. It was too late to stop but I pressed on the brake as hard as I could and tried to swerve away. I heard the sound of the indentation and airbags being deployed. The only thing that kept me in the seat was my seat belt. I remember trying to reach for my phone but it was cracked and I could barely move. I heard sirens of firetrucks and an ambulance and then all the sudden it went black. All I could think was that I hit him, I had hit the cyclist.

I woke up in a hospital bed with a doctor and my parents there at my side. The first question I asked was "How long have a been out?" and I got a response from the doctor saying "a little over a day".

I looked around to see what was wrong with me and I saw that I had a bandage on my arm from a little cut from the windshield glass. The doctor told me that I was lucky and that I only got a little scratch along with a concussion that would go away with time. Then I started to freak out about the cyclist, just hoping he made it. The doctor said he did live but he is suffer majorly and woke up a little earlier than I did. Then he said, "He was unable to move his legs," and then I found out, "He is paralyzed from the waist down". That just broke me. I couldn't breathe. What have I done? I asked if I could see him and the doctor wasn't sure if it was a good idea and said he would talk to him about it.

Later that day, I saw him. As I walked into the room he had a cast on his arm and a bruised up body. I worked up the courage to look him in the eyes and I just froze. It was Jason, Jason Wells from my school. Me being a junior, I didn't know him very well but I knew that he was a sophomore. I didn't know what to say, I was just speechless. He now has to live a life with physical limitations because of me. What if he was going to be a professional cyclist in the olympics? I started balling my eyes out and ran out of the room.

Three months later, I am now going to Jason's physical therapy appointments with him. Working through the accident with him. I feel responsible for his life now and that I owe Jason at least going to rehab with him to pay back my forgiveness. If the situation was flipped around, I would want the other person to have the kindness to help me through it. With time I think it would help both of us get through the crash. I have learned so much from this traumatic event, including not to use my cell phone while driving. In fact I try to keep my eyes on the road as much as possible, because anything could happen. In this event I have managed to Arrive Alive but it doesn't always work out that way.