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### Realize Your Mortality, Be Selfless

Teens, we often feel invincible. We fall, we can get back up, we scrape our knees, and they heal. Rarely do teens encounter situations where we are forced to think about our mortality. Frequently teens are seldom faced with a situation where they have to stop and think; this could be life-changing. However, we are not invincible. Our actions can have consequences. Growing up in our generation where we see the world as anything but perfect may lead many teens to think that their life is insignificant, that their demise would be okay. However, we all have someone around us who would disagree. If our mortality and our impact are not enough of a convincing reason, what about the life of another? Drinking and driving do not just impact us. As a teen, it is easy to forget that consequences and drinking and driving can have the most significant effect.

We never think that anything wrong will ever happen to us. We see on the news that bad things happen, and we never think about it being a possibility for us. We believe, oh, that person was unlucky or dumb; I am luckier and smarter. However, no one who drinks and drives is smarter, and luck is unreliable; we never know when our luck will turn. Drivers under the age of 21 represent about 10% of licensed drivers in the U.S. but are responsible for 17% of fatal alcohol-involved crashes (Sobering Up Administrator Sobering Up: A blog about drunk driving et al.). This thought process of "it will not happen to me" is either the conscious or subconscious thoughts that we are invincible, but the statistic shows the invalidity and danger in this thought process. We are not invincible, and we are not immune to being impacted by teenage drinking and driving.

The impact of drinking and driving can also go beyond us. The few who think, "I will drink and drive, I know the risks, and I believe my life is worth it" are wrong. Everyone's life is meaningful, whether you believe it or not. Limiting yourself and ending your life early could be impacting the future of the world. If a teen's life ends too soon, they could be depriving the world of a scientist who has a research breakthrough, a politician who creates change, or an inventor who changes how we look at things. Life is unpredictable, and by drinking and driving, you are gambling away your life, a life that could create something beautiful. That can have a long-term impact, but there are also immediate consequences. Our loved ones also have to live with knowing someone they genuinely care about is gone. I have been around individuals who have lost someone close to drinking and driving. Some of the happiest and strongest people broke because someone they cared about was gone. I had to hear stories of how the father did not want to leave their house and how the mother would sob at their child's favorite color. By being a teen at drinking and driving, in addition to gambling your life away, you are also risking the possibility of negatively changing someone else's life forever. The pain of losing you does not ever go away, and your loved ones will carry that with you. Drinking and driving is a selfish act because even if you do not care about how it impacts you, others are still at risk.

Drinking and driving can also impact the life of a stranger. Say you are in the lucky percentage who survives; what if your accident harms someone else, an innocent person who did not realize this would be their last drive. They did nothing to bring on this fate; they were just unlucky and at the wrong place at the wrong time. Now their loved ones have to move on and live with their death. The world will be deprived of that individual's contribution, and that guilt is on you. You took away someone's life, you changed the life of their loved ones, and you are now

a killer. Due to your selfish act, many individual lives, including your own, will change, and some feel like their life is shattering, and the only thing to blame is your thoughtless action.

Drinking and driving is a gamble that is not worth anything. No reward is worth the risk of drinking and driving. As young people, we have to remember we are not immortal and never know when our luck will run out. When our luck runs out, so many individuals will have to pay the cost. The selfish act of drinking and driving is not worth anything. Before you think you will be okay and can risk the consequences, try to consider a few things. Would I be okay knowing the stress and heartache of those who care about me? Could I live with myself and look in the mirror if I survive, but someone else does not? Be intelligent and selfless. Call someone. Take the punishment of privileges taken away instead of driving and the consequence of a life being taken away.

## Work Cited

Sobering Up Administrator Sobering Up: A Blog about Drunk Driving, Sobering Up Administrator, Sobering Up: A Blog about Drunk Driving, and Name. "The Sobering Statistics of UNDERAGE Drunk Driving." 12 Nov. 2018. Web. 03 May 2021.