

### *Disassociating*

I slapped him. I don't know what came over me at that moment but my anger got the best of me. I shouldn't have done that but after finding out my boyfriend of three years had been cheating on me for two of those years nothing was going through my head but rage and resentment. I was so distraught and confused that tears were filling my eyes as I ran out of his house in shock at the events that just unfolded before me. There were so many things going on in my head. Should I go back? Should he give me closure? But the biggest question I had was, should I be driving? My dad's voice circulated through my head saying Savannah you're too upset to be driving or Savannah, crying is still distracted driving. I pushed those thoughts away and that was ultimately the biggest mistake of my life.

I ran out of his driveway before he could get to me and hopped in my shiny brown Ford Edge. As more thoughts ran through my head more tears gathered in my eyes. I could barely see anything but I was so upset all I wanted to do was drive and scream to sad music. I turned on *Favorite Crime* by Olivia Rodrigo and hit the gas. I soon realized that I could not see a thing between the fog and the tears. My music was on full blast and my phone was flooded with calls and texts from him telling me to come back. This just fueled my anger and sadness even more. All of a sudden, many questions invaded my mind yet again, how could he do this to me? Was I not good enough? Is she prettier than me? I was more focused on those questions than the vehicle I was in control of.

Then I blinked and it was all over. None of it mattered anymore nor did I ever get the answers to those questions because my life was over. I was so focused on the fact that I thought

my life was over because my boyfriend cheated on me then I was that my life was actually over because I was being a reckless driver. I had started to wipe my tears and when I looked up I was looking at a big tall oak tree that would soon take my life. That tree was the cause of my death, the reason my mother no longer had a daughter, and the reason my best friend no longer had a support system. But was that tree the reason? No, I was the reason. Distracted driving is not just texting or drinking. Distracted driving can be just simply thinking about something other than driving.

Driving is a privilege and it's something that we all dreamed about doing when we were kids. What comes with privilege is often rules and with rules come consequences if you break them. I did exactly that. I was naive into thinking that being visibly upset wasn't distracted driving. The consequences of my actions ended up being the lesson other kids had to learn in their driver's education class. As I sat in that class 2 years ago I thought that could never happen to me. No, I would never drink and drive, no I would never text and drive, no distracted driving is awful. But what I did that day was a lesson that unfortunately I could not even learn from because I was dead. Some are lucky enough to survive accidents but others aren't.

Don't become that statistic, don't become that early-morning news story. Being aware is the biggest part of driving and as soon as you step into that car it should be the only part of driving. If you are visibly upset you need to contain yourself before operating a vehicle. Texting and driving and drinking and driving are the most common types of distracted driving but what people also fail to realize is that those aren't the only types of distracted driving. Be safe, be smart and arrive alive.