

Please Don't Drink and Drive

I've been impressed once more to write about this topic. Drunken driving is one of the major causes of serious accidents and deaths on our streets. Why do people drive while they are drunk? Why do so many people still drink and drive, even when it is illegal to do so? Is it because they think they "can handle it?" Is it because they feel they would never cause an accident? Keep in mind that no matter the argument or rationale one may have, an innocent one—an occupant of the car or a pedestrian—is the one to get seriously injured or killed. This is painfully serious.

Although there are accidents during the day due to drunken driving, however, after midnight, alcohol-infused drivers outnumber them. Many people, after getting off from a late shift at work, stop by a liquor store, fill their tanks with alcohol, and then head home, often at high speeds. Many leave a late-night party with their stomachs oversized with liquor, wine, etc, and drive at high speeds heading home to sleep it off but often head into another driver or light pool instead.

The article entitled "How alcohol affects driving ability" by the USA National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states: "Alcohol can cause accidents because it impairs the brain's function, making it harder to think, reason, and coordinate muscles. At low to moderate levels, alcohol can impair balance, visual focus, reaction time, judgment, and change behavior. As alcohol levels rise, the negative effects on the central nervous system increase." Alcohol and other impairing drugs reduce the ability to judge distance, speed, and the movement of other vehicles. With increasing impairment, you could drift across the centerline, wander from lane to lane, or even run off the roadway.

Some may argue that they do not drink much. But I need to remind them that even one drink can affect one's ability to drive safely. It is my view that alcohol consumption is doing much harm to families and the nation. The Bahamas ranks high in the world on alcohol consumption. The Word Fact Book 2019, which gives alcohol consumption per capita ranks The Bahamas as 29 out of 189 countries with a consumption rate of 9.48 liters of alcohol. Trinidad and Tobago ranked at 74 at 5.81 liters. The United States of America ranked 35 and Italy ranked 51. The highest was The Cook Islands at 12.97 liters.

It is time that we look seriously at reducing drunken driving in The Bahamas. If you insist on drinking at a party or after work, always have a designated driver. That is someone who does not drink at all to be the driver to take you home.

Every five years or so, I feel impressed to share this touching poem (author unknown) that expresses the pain of drunken driving. Read and share with a friend.

I Didn't Drink and Drive, So Why Am I the One to Die?

I went to the party, Mom, I remembered what you said.
You told me not to drink, Mom, so I drank soda instead.

I really felt proud inside, Mom, the way you said I would.
I didn't drink and drive, Mom, even though the others said I should.

I know I did the right thing, Mom, I know you are always right.
Now the party is finally ending, Mom, as everyone is driving out of sight.
As I got into my car, Mom, I knew I'd get home in one piece.
Because of the way you raised me, so responsible and sweet.

I started to drive away, Mom, but as I pulled out into the road,
The other car didn't see me, Mom, and hit me like a load.
As I lay there on the pavement, Mom, I hear the policeman say,
The other guy is drunk, Mom, and now I'm the one who will pay.

I'm lying here dying, Mom, I wish you'd get here soon.
How could this happen to me, Mom? My life just burst like a balloon.
There is blood all around me, Mom, and most of it is mine.
I hear the medic say, Mom, I'll die in a short time.

I just wanted to tell you, Mom, I swear I didn't drink.
It was the others, Mom. That other didn't think.
He was probably at the same party as I.
The only difference is, he drank and I will die.

Why do people drink, Mom? It can ruin your whole life.
I'm feeling sharp pains now. Pains just like a knife.
The guy who hit me is walking, Mom, and I don't think it's fair.
I'm lying here dying and all he can do is stare.

Tell my brother not to cry, Mom. Tell Daddy to be brave.
And when I pass away, Mom, put "Daddy's Girl" on my grave.
Someone should have told him, Mom, not to drink and drive.
If only they had told him, Mom, I would still be alive.

My breath is getting short, Mom, I'm becoming very scared.
Please don't cry for me, Mom. When I needed you, you were always here.
I have one last question, Mom, before I say good bye.
I didn't drink and drive, so why am I the one to die?

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