

Today I can give you only what I have, The memories I've stored in my heart, The knowledge of my life experience, And hopes for the future.

One memory I carry is a time Matt and I rode in my van. Stopped at a traffic light. I told him, there's a chance one of your classmates will never make it to graduation. He asked, why? Well, there always seems to be a fatal accident involving excessive speed or driving while intoxicated. The light turned green. I hesitate before pulling out because I'm wondering, who will it be? At that moment a car speeds by trying to beat the red light! It was a close call, a near miss.

We will all experience near misses in life. The hope is that you and I will recognize them as warnings from the cosmos to stay alert, pay attention. When I made that prediction to Matthew I never expected that his would be the token life for the class of 2005. I never wanted it to be my boy. But it was, I asked Matthew what he would want to say today, to you, his classmates. His reply: Yo, you can't live your life worrying about what's gonna happen next. But it's good to be smart about it. Just think and ask yourself, "Will I be putting myself or anyone else in danger if I ??; And fill in the blank." Make the best decision. Each day we get to fill in the blanks. We get to make choices.

Driving a vehicle is one of those adult privileges we have once we pass the tests. It's a huge responsibility with the potential to become a lethal weapon in the hands of someone who behaves irresponsibly, immaturely. There have been enough tears. I don't want to cry at your grave, Or need to comfort your family or friends. I want you to enjoy your life and your time now. The universe holds much promise. It's in your hands. The future belongs to you. So protect yourself.

My son, Paul has a response when asked if he wants a drink. I hear him say, No thanks. I don't need alcohol to have fun. I hope your answer is the same when offered alcohol or other substances.

Life is always more exciting when lived with our eyes wide open and consciously aware. The full range of experience from a heart so stuffed with joy it feels ready to explode, to a grief so deep that we're sure we'll never smile again. This is where life is lived. This is where a soul will grow. Not in a drunken stupor, or numbed out. That's the place of nightmares where a life becomes lost. Let's face it!

Matt's chillin and he's watching. He wants you safe. He wants you to live. We want you safe. We want you to live