

Erika Goth

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Senior Speech

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### Senior Speech

291,600 miles. This is approximately how many miles I have driven to get to and from school over the past four years. Living down valley has made my high school experience unique from other students here at Aspen High. As soon as I became a freshman my life changed, it completely transitioned to where everything I did was in Aspen besides sleeping. But sports, friends, activities, everything, they were all in Aspen which of course made for a lot of driving up and down the valley.

When I was a freshman, I had an older sister, Annie, who was already a junior at Aspen High, so she already had her license and a car. However, Annie has always been more fearful than I and was uncomfortable driving to Aspen every day on her own. Unfortunately for me, this meant I had to take the school bus for the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  of my freshmen year. I was really shy my freshmen year, so the idea of sitting next to some stranger on a cold bus at 7:30 am was terrifying for me. It wasn't until my sophomore year that Annie was finally ready to drive me. By this point, I was becoming more comfortable with high school. I argued with Annie a lot on how high school works, which of course made her mad considering she was senior at the time and obviously knew more than me. However, I still insisted that I knew better about everything. Because of this, I also felt as though I would be a better driver and I could get us to school faster, and I made sure to tell her that all the time. Finally, once I got my license, I was ready to take over as being the driver. She did not agree. For months and months, we argued over who was driving until we reached a point where we both grew tired of the same long drive and started arguing over who didn't want to drive.

Junior year, finally, the year I have been waiting for my entire life, I would be at school by myself: no siblings, and no parents as my teachers. I was ready. I drove myself to and from school in my 2001 brown Grand Jeep Cherokee that had a broken stereo system and a duct taped window that wouldn't close. At first, I was relieved; I could listen to my own music when the stereo did work and I didn't have to talk to anyone that early in the morning. However, this honeymoon phase didn't last long. I quickly grew tired of my own music and bored on the same long drive. There was no one to drive me when I wanted to sleep or to complain about school work too. No one to play the license plate game with and no one to show me new songs when mine got old. And to add to this, the city of Aspen decided to do construction by the bridge making my commute an extra hour because of traffic. Junior year driving was not the reprieve I was expecting.

My year of independence was short-lived, now that I am a senior I have a little sister who is a freshman. Being the middle child, I have been able to experience what it's like to be the younger sister getting driven to school, and being the older sister driving to school. And through this experience, I feel bad for how I treated Annie, because my younger sister, Nicole, has really made this year difficult when it comes to driving. I would like to apologize to Sheri Smith for being late to my first-period business class every day, it's all Nicole's fault. And I would like to apologize to Annie for making her late every day of her senior year, that's all my fault.

As my senior year comes to an end, I look back to the many miles driven both alone and with my sisters and I am grateful for the time I got to spend with them. My entire four years of high school was spent in Aspen except for where I slept at night. Because of this I rarely spent time with my sisters, making those drives really special whether I realized that in the time or not. And by being the middle child, I was able to experience both perspectives of being the vexing little sister as well as the "responsible" older sisters. Through this, I learned empathy and respect for other people's ideas. And as I

move onto the next stage of my life where I will no longer have to drive at all to my classes, I will remember that the best life lessons can come from the most mundane experiences.