

Welcome to my life...

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John Eric Basas

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Dedications:

This book is dedicated to my family and my friends. I'd like to dedicate this book to all the people that have helped me throughout my life and who have been there for me when ever I need them. I especially would especially like to dedicate this book to my Mother, Father, and Brother who have helped me with everything I have had to over come through out the course of my life.

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***“The only way out, is the
only way through...”***

Welcome To My Life....

“A normal life.” Can you utterly define what that means? How do you guy and describe or even reason out what a Normal life is? That’s something that I wonder everyday. See I used to be seem like every other kid, laughing and smiling, not a worry in the world but “what am I going to do tomorrow?” See my life was heading in a direction I wanted it to be going in, then something stopped me in my tracks; I hit a wall. I hit a wall so high and so hard to get by that till this day, I’m still trying to get past it. So before you read this book, please be thankful for the things you have in your life, because someday, you’re life may take a turn or you might hit a wall you may never really overcome where you are reminded everyday that you are still standing there, still trying to find your way past that wall, just like me...

A turn for the better or worse?

Everyone goes through many changes in their lives, many things that they encounter that just changed their lives in some ways, like getting a new hair cut, getting a new car, getting a new house, or learning something new. Others can go through life altering changes though, like losing a body part, going blind, becoming deaf, or...having cancer, like me....

It was the fifth grade, and life could possibly seem to have been any better. I could remember just about everything that school year amazingly, even up till today, probably because that was the year my life went into a twist. One day I was playing volleyball during gym class, and the ball had suddenly come my way. I tried to turn around to return the ball to the other side, but I suddenly slipped and had hit the back of my head on the floor. Yeah it hurt a lot, but I was that tough little kid who always got up and started playing again after he got hurt. The few weeks after this I started to go through a lot of changes; I started having headaches that wouldn't stop and were so unbearable that I would only get a bout a few hours of sleep a night, I had double vision so I started to only use one eye to look at things, I was losing a lot of weight because I felt nauseous when ever I saw food and one week I even lost ten pounds, and amazingly I was actually excited to go to school and wanted to stay there because school was the only place I didn't have a head ache like the rest of my day. As amazingly as all these things were obvious to

see, I went to the doctor numerous amount of times to only be told to take some medication and that I would feel better, but after going to the doctors so much and seeing that I had only gotten worse and worse my parents decided to take some bigger actions. After being transported to the emergency room one day, one of the E.R. doctors had suggested that I get an M.R.I. One thing I could remember about my M.R.I. was how pissed off my dad was when he received a phone call that my M.R.I. scan had to be moved to the next week, I remember how he yelled on the phone at the secretary so much and the look on his face and I was really thankful that he had done what he did, because what we found out in my M.R.I. scan was that I had a cancerous brain tumor called medulablastoma. I was glad that my M.R.I. came that week and not the next, because when I was stationed into Rush Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago, my family and I were notified that if we hadn't caught onto this tumor, that I could have died very soon. If there is anything that comes to mind when I remember this, it's what my dad had told be about this governor in Florida and what happened to his daughter. His daughter had died suddenly, and no one ever knew what had been wrong with her and she showed all the same symptoms that I had shown. You don't know how lucky I feel to have found out about this tumor sooner than later.

Through the next month or two, I spent everyday in the hospital. And for the first 3 or 4 days at the hospital I wasn't allowed to sleep at all because the

doctors were scared that I would die if I had fallen asleep because of how long I've already had this brain tumor. On the fifth day there, I had my first surgery which was to install a shunt into my head: this shunt was supposed to help the fluid in my head that was being blocked by the brain tumor to drain to my spine like it should have. After this was installed I stopped having a headache all day long. I remember waking up after that surgery to find how the doctor had shaved my head to perform the surgery easier, my hairs was completely shaved off all over my head except for the left side of my head. It looked like I had a Mohawk that consisted of hair that was only on the left side of my head. After the next few weeks I just stayed in the hospital under the care of the doctors in the Intensive Care area of the hospital until I had to have another surgery. I can remember one day where I had suddenly woke up and saw my mom all panicking and everything calling out to the head nurse Jason to check up on me. My blood pressure was either getting very high or very low but I felt completely fine except for the fact that I had suddenly been woken up from such a nice nap. My next two surgeries were pretty serious, one was for installing a permanent shunt into my head which I still have today, and one for removing the brain tumor and the cancerous parts in my head. Having the shunt installed didn't seem to scared me much, because I already went through that surgery but it was the removal of my brain tumor that made me kind of nervous. The procedure as I was told was going to take 8 to 10

hours and it was a very serious surgery, and before the surgery I remembered being prepared for the surgery where had a bunch of things stuck onto my head where the doctor was most likely going to make an incision in as far as I could see. As long as the surgery was, my aunts, uncles, and cousins were there with my family waiting for me to come out of the procedure room. When I woke up after the surgery, I felt so weak and so out of it that I could barely move a muscle, but after a week or two I started to feel better and I was moved into the children's ward because my status was good enough to not have to stay in the I.C.U.

Here in the Children's ward I stayed until the doctors felt good enough to have me return home, but there were several things that I had been told about and had to encounter before I could go home. One of these things was physical therapy; I had been so used to just lying in the bed all day long not even getting up or feeling good enough to go and walk in the halls that all my muscles had turned to mush. I couldn't even stand up or balance on my own two feet for long, so every few days in the hospital I was sent to the physical therapy department where I would do a lot of exercises to regain the use of my muscles and soon enough I was able to walk on my own again. Another thing that I had to face before leaving the hospital was my plans for Chemo therapy and Radiation Therapy. The plan was that I had to take a pill everyday for a bout a year or so and come back to the Rush hospital everyday to receive radiation treatment

to my head. Although this may seem like not a lot to do, it really was. It wasn't just the problem of having to go to Chicago everyday for year or two but the problems that became associated with my Chemo treatment and radiation therapy. One of the many problems that I was having was nausea and sores in my mouth which made eating a lot harder. I would eat things and become hungry but at the site of food I would get nauseous and end up throwing up the food I had eaten or not eat at all. Another problem that I had was getting sores in my mouth because of the Chemo treatments, so when I wasn't feeling nauseous and hungry, I wouldn't eat because I had sores that even hurt just to chew even on the other side of my mouth. Another problem that had resulted from not eating a lot was that I wasn't gaining weight and was losing a lot of weight so in order for me to maintain my health, my dietary advisor at the hospital suggested that I have a g-tube. A g-tube was a tube that goes into your stomach where you can install a cord that will let supplement milk drain into. My parents agreed to this and so did I because it would help me gain weight and help me eat. So when I went home, a machine was sent to my house and it was used to pump supplement milk into my g-tube while I slept and through this I was able to gain weight instead of losing it very often every week. My life was on its way to getting back on track.

Today I still face many of the changes that I had suffered because of my cancer. One thing I'm facing right now is that I am still hearing impaired

and it is hard for me to communicate with a lot of people at anytime. It is especially hard for me to talk to my friend during school because it always very noisy in the halls and in the cafeteria, but even in class I still have trouble understanding the words that my friends say to me. I even have trouble in class not talking to friend but anything in class where someone may be speaking. For example with my teachers, my teachers usually use a microphone for me to be able to hear everything that they are saying but sometimes this microphone breaks and I have to wait a bout a month for it to be repaired. If it don't have a microphone I usually am supplied with a note taker or someone who sits next to me with a laptop and types everything that everyone is saying. Another problem I have in class is when someone answers or asks a question. My microphone is programmed to hear what is said into it but the words need to be said very close to the microphone so I don't hear what another student may ask the teacher or if they answer a question the teacher may ask them. To me, this is really nothing, but sometime I'd like to hear what it is they asked the teacher or the answer that they gave to the teacher. Another problem I have is that after my cancer I became very weak and only started to gain my strength back very slowly. Compared to everyone around me, I probably have about half their strength or even less and that really bothers me to know that people younger than me are stronger than I am. This also really bothers me with a lot of the activities I'm in like break dancing. In break dancing you need a lot of

strength to do certain moves but to me these moves are really hard because I don't have enough strength to do them, and it really bothers me when I see younger guys doing the things I try to do because they have the strength to pull it off. Although I may not be as strong as them, I am still trying to get stronger and do the things they are able to do or just get stronger for my own benefit.

People go through many changes in their lives, but one thing I went through that forever changed my life is cancer. Through all the things I go through everyday because of my cancer, it is a daily reminder of cancer took my life and twist and turned it into so many ways. Although there are many things that I hate about having cancer, I feel that there are some things that I can benefit from this. I still never knew why it is that I had cancer, and that is one thing that I'll always remember but one thing my mom use to tell me is that God has something in store for me, so I think I'll just stick to what my mom said.

Changes

If I could change one social problem in the world I would change the social problem across the world that affects everyone, violence. Violence affect everyone around them. Its not just like if two people got into an argument and started to have a fight, that fight could affect everyone around them even in any little way possible. you could think of violence as a chain reaction in some way. Everything is affected after just one thing is done. Its like a wave. One person may get into a fight with another, then that other person may know people present at the fight with the other person crew. The fight between just the two of those guys could escalate into a huge fight between two gangs, and who knows? The result could be anything, a few bruises, a few broken bones, a few lost lives. Do u think violence is really needed in the world? Couldn't people just sit down and talk about their problems instead of trying to beat the crap out of another person to prove a point, or to decimate once country to show superiority? I would change this social issue because I think the world needs violence, if there's anything we need its peace. People should learn how to get along not learn how to punch the next person, or shoot them and even kill them, or even kill those around them. Why do we need violence, what positive good comes out of the violent things anyone ever does? You could make your point, by beating someone to a bloody pulp, but what does that prove? That you were right about what the fight even was over? Or did you just prove of how bad a

person you are for having to beat someone to a bloody pulp to prove that you were right, to make a point. Would you threaten someone with a gun, and tell them you would shoot them if you were trying to make a point? Why couldn't you just justify your opinion with facts, and proof. Sure everyone has their differences, but why solve those differences through violence? There's no point, its stupid. If the world is to be filled with more and more violence, who knows maybe could be thrown into a whole new world war were nothing will ever stop, people will fight other people, argue about every little thing or kill each other. So you see if there is anything in this world that needs to be changed, just ask yourself this question, "how much do you value life or do you even value life at all?"

To Race on the Street or the Track: That is the Question.

The import scene: it consists of glamorous models, cars modified with the newest parts inside and out, and with people of all ages who have an adrenaline rush just hiding inside them. Basically any of these people could be as young as 16: all you need is a driver's license to drive a car. Getting your driver's license, it's like a right of passage to your adulthood, being one step closer to being more and more independent from you parents. Along with these things, many people a lot of things in mind when they get their driver's license, like the ability to drive where ever they please, the ability to go out and drive your friends around, the freedom to go out with out having to ask your parents or anyone else to give you a ride; but for some people, they have other things in mind, like street racing. For me, that is one thing that is on my mind, but unlike others, I choose not to do it illegally. My cousin has always been someone that I look up to; he is kind of like an idol to me. We are always interested in the same things, so I tend look to him for guidance or other things when I need it. One thing we both share an interest in is cars and racing. Right now he has an Acura Integra Type R which is highly modified and I have seen the amazing things he has been able to do with his car, but he has the same view point as I do: to race legally as opposed to illegally racing. We both know and agree that it is safer to race on the track then it is to

race on the street. With wanting to street race and with the belief that it is a better idea to legally race than illegally, I wrote this paper to show everyone and support both sides: to show the view point of the street racer, to inform people of the laws that have been implemented for illegal street racing, the consequences if illegal street racing is the path to be chosen, and solutions to race safer.

Over the past couple of years, street racing has been growing more and more popular. Not only has this been because of how many people start to get interested in it because of friends but much has come from the media. In the year 2003, "more juveniles went to court on racing charges than in 2000" (Morse). Illegal street racing has become kind of a rebellious thing to do for many people "It's making more people do it. They just want to do it because they know they ain't supposed to be doing it" says Jason Ramirez (Morse), but there are many other reasons for why people street race and much of it is promoted through "numerous web sites, movies, songs and video games" ("Race the Police"), but many of these only show that street racing is "a safe activity even though illegal street races are notorious for being poorly controlled, unorganized and tend to operate with a distinct lack of rules and safety measures" (Blackburn). One reason people may race, is that adrenaline rush. Teens like to live life to the fullest, and for teens, "risk taking is common." (Halevy) Although, street racing is dangerous, you may be asking "why do teens street race?" According

to some street racers, “it’s just like power” says Paul Smith who had his license suspended and sent to jail because of street racing (Halevy). Others say “Adrenaline, you can’t beat it. It’s the worst drug; you know, you got some, you want more. You got power; you want more. You never stop” (Halevy).

To a hard-core group, street racing represents something that their everyday lives cannot offer and is nothing less than a controlled substance, a missing link, and a step up in the psychic ladder.(Blackburn) Another reason that there have been man upsurges in street races is because of the media. Movies like *The fast and the Furious* have shown teens how views of the underground world of illegal street racing, or even older movies have given a glimpse at what street racing is like. From the era of James Dean, illegal street racing was the popular thing to do among the rebels of the time. Movies like “Rebel without a Cause” and “Grease” inspired many to bring out their big-block Chevys and race them up and down the street, through the night, as people would watch in excitement.”(Blackburn)

Not only has this movie given teens and others a glamorous view on the street racing world, but the movies has influenced many people to even begin to street race. Many people started going out and buying Mazda Rx-7’s just like the Rx-7 that Vin Diesel used in “The Fast and the Furious.” Much of the media also portrays that the Illegal street racing venue brings along fame and fortune. This encourages more and more people to street race but they never seem to

realize its consequences. Although many people are being influenced through the media about illegal street racing, many of these people usually doing anything that is even close to the movies: usually they are doing things that are even more dangerous.

The cars have changed from heavy big-block muscle cars to smaller lightweight imports from Japan and Europe. These cars with rebels behind the wheels are driving faster and more recklessly than James Dean could ever have imagined.(Blackburn)

There are many causes of death when it comes to illegal street racing. These causes can come from any factor when racing, whether it may come from a collision or an accident or even one little mistake on the driver's part. "When you put together young drivers, no seat belts, souped-up cars and speed of 90 or 100 miles an hour, it's just a prescription for death," says Ohio representative, Gary Cates (Morse). The faster you go the easier it is for a driver to die or to cause even more damage to those around them. A major contributing factor to the high speeds that many of these new cars are able to attain is due to the addition of "high tech equipment designed to rapidly boost" these cars (Morse). Many of these after market parts can add tons of horse power to a car and increase its ability to reach higher and higher speeds more easily.

Some of the most popular modifications that have been pointed out by many mechanics as well as "car enthusiasts" (Morse) are:

Nitrous-oxide kit: A tank that looks like a fire extinguisher is connected with tubing leading to the engine's combustion chambers. When activated with a button, the non-toxic gas releases oxygen molecules that maximize an engine's fuel efficiency and immediately burst the car's speed. Cost: \$500 to \$2,000 for the system. (Morse)

Superchargers, turbochargers: Force more air into the motor, increasing fuel capacity and horsepower. Can boost power by more than 40 percent. Turbochargers get their power from the exhaust system. Superchargers bolt onto the engine and are belt-driven. Cost: \$2,800-\$4,300. (Morse)

Cold-air induction system: Decreases temperature of incoming air by about 10 degrees and increases horsepower by about 1 percent. Cost: \$200-\$300. (Morse)

Computer chips: Can be used to change factory specifications on fuel flow, fuel delivery and ignition timing - making a car go fast. Some allow users to custom-write a program. Cost starts at \$130. (Morse)

Laptop computer: With specialized software, can be used to tap into the car's electronic control module, the "brain" of a car's fuel and air management systems. Can help user decide optimum time to deploy nitrous oxide. (Morse)

Body kits installed onto vehicles can also help the speed of a car. Some body kits aren't just built to make the car look like a piece of art but to help the aerodynamics of a car to help it achieve higher speeds.

Another reason why many people get into illegal street racing is because of their lifestyles. Many people like to live their lives on the edge, not being afraid to take a risk with what every thing may come their way in life. Others have grown up around cars their whole lives. Like kids who work with their mothers or fathers at their jobs as auto mechanics or running car businesses. Some people just grow accustomed to being around cars and racing. It's like some kids who grow up around athletic parents or professional athletes, they grow up to just be like their parents or even do more, well the same goes for some street racers. Many of them have grown up with parent who are either working as mechanics, auto shop owners, or even sometimes racers or race car drivers themselves. Jason Ramirez says "I've been around it so long. It's really kind of in my blood. I can't get away from it" (Morse).

Driving on a daily basis, there are a number of factors within it. There are many dangers that come along with driving a car. Most areas have speed limits that range from speeds of 10 to 45 or even 55 miles per hour, but for street racers, those speeds are like being the driver driving Ms. Daisy around. Street racers race past speed of 100 miles an hour making their sport a very dangerous one for not only themselves but those around them. Police have had a hard time with trying to crack down on illegal street racing, but now there are many laws that have implemented into the justice system because of illegal

street racing. The first time you are convicted of street racing, some things you can be faced with are:

Minimum county jail sentence of 24 hours and maximum of 90 days.

Vehicle probably impounded for at least 30 days.

Owner responsible for vehicle's towing and storage charges (\$1,000 or more).

If owner fails to pay, vehicle could be sold at a lien sale.

Anyone who aids or abets a street race also faces a maximum 90-day jail sentence. (Street

Legal)

Other laws state that "It is illegal to drive at speeds too fast or too slow for conditions, to travel too fast to stop before hitting another vehicle or to travel at speeds above posted limits. The maximum legal speed is 65 mph on interstate highways and divided freeways" (Morse) and the penalties for these violations are determined and "increased based on how much the violator exceeded the speed limit" (Morse). Some states even have their own law requirements:

Kentucky law says simply: "No person shall engage upon any street or highway in motor-vehicle

racing, drag racing or any other form of competition involving motor vehicles." First-time offenders can be fined up to \$200 and/or sentenced to 30 days in jail. The penalty can double for a subsequent offense in a five-year period, and the car can be seized (Morse).

Not only are there laws passed onto illegal street racing, but there are also laws that have been implemented into the police officers and their discretion to make charges against street racers. In Ohio, officers are required to "prove two vehicles tried to outdistance each other while traveling side-by-side from a starting point to an ending point. Rapid acceleration of two side-by-side vehicles to exceed the speed limit" (Morse). In California, the CHP (California Highway Patrol) have issued laws where some modifications to vehicles are illegal like loud stereos which are considered illegal if they can be heard 50 feet away. It is also considered illegal if you do not have a front and rear license plate that has been issued by the DMV, and although radar detectors are legal, it is illegal to have "jammers, or any device which interferes with radar signals" (Morse). Other laws include:

Lowered frame (or any other part) that is lower than the lowest point of the wheel rim.,
Air and hydraulic suspension systems that are operated unsafely or with the vehicle lower

than allowed. Tinting the front side windows and the windshield (except for a narrow band at the top of the windshield). Windows behind the driver's head may be tinted. If rear window is tinted, right-side mirror is required. Lack of white rear license plate light.

It must illuminate the license plate, not project light behind the vehicle. Missing front and/or rear bumpers . Illegal engine modifications. Blue and yellow headlights.

Headlights must be white - blue and yellow are illegal. Look for the DOT symbol on the bulb and package. Headlights brighter or higher wattage than those from the factory. You may be able to see better, but the lights are illegal. Tail lights other than red. Illegal brake lights. Brake lights on vehicles newer than 1979 must be red. (Vehicles older than 1979 may be red or yellow.) Lack of rear reflectors. Two red reflectors are required on the rear of cars and trucks. Incorrect color of turn signal. It must be white or yellow to the front, red or yellow to the rear. Red lights to the front. They are illegal except on emergency vehicles. Tail lights that incorporate a bulb with a red tint or coating. In general, custom tail lights that incorporate a clear outer shell and red inner lens are legal.

If they don't incorporate reflectors, they must be added to the vehicle. Tail lights that are too dim, washed out or show yellow, white or other colors. Illegal color of side marker lights. If present, must be yellow in the front and red in the rear.

Driving with just parking lights on Vehicles that have factory-installed automatic daytime running lights must meet federal requirements and are legal. Illegal decorative lights. All flashing decorative lights are illegal. Illegal windshield washer nozzle lights.

Only white or yellow are allowed.

Although street racing may seem like fun and games to some people, there are a lot of consequences associated with illegal street racing. Many people are blinded of the many fatalities or money lost and lives taken by the glamorous models and fancy and stunning cars. "Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 16 and 20" (Halevy). Some consequences of illegal street racing are fines.

Racers face possible arrest and jail time. Racers might have their car impounded for 30 days. If convicted of street racing or aiding and abetting a street race, you can be imprisoned for up to three months and fined up to \$1,000. Spectators are subject to penalties as well. (Halevy)

Another aspect of illegal street racing that are usually overlooked is the injuries. Many people suffer from both minor and major injuries that have been caused by illegal street racing and accidents. Many street racers have been through a lot of these injuries, like this young lady, Juddi Lin, from Nevada who is a former street racer:

"I've been through six cars in the past five years," Lin admitted. "Two out of the six were (demolished) in street-racing accidents. Both of them were a total loss. The first one, I was street racing a Mustang on a rainy day and I broke my collarbone. On the second one, I was at the illegal street races and wasn't wearing my seatbelt. My forehead hit the (windshield), and my chin hit the steering wheel. They sent me to the trauma unit. It was an unhappy picture." (Confessions of a former street racer: 19-year-old Lin now only races at The Strip)

Although some illegal street racers are lucky enough to only suffer some injuries from their racing accidents and collisions, others are not so fortunate. There have been many incidents where racers have been hurled out of their cars or just died from the impacts of the accidents or collisions they are in, Like Justin Lewis of Butler County who died at the age of 17 after being catapulted 50 feet from his car in a race:

For 17-year-old Justin Lewis, that day came after police repeatedly stopped him for traffic

violations and let him go without ticketing him. He outlined three such incidents in an Oct. 20 journal entry and marveled: "My luck has been shot through the roof." Eighteen days later, Lewis was killed in a high-speed crash. On Nov. 7, Lewis had arrived early for classes at Lakota West High School and was upset over girl troubles. Using his cell phone, Lewis text-messaged friends, saying he was leaving school to blow off steam. At 8:17 a.m., his friends got another text message: "I just topped out my Corolla. I'm on my way back." By 8:20, Lewis had wrecked the Corolla after racing with a pickup truck on Union Centre Boulevard. A witness said he thought both vehicles exceeded 100 mph. After Lewis died, his mom discovered the journal entry. She said she wished police had ticketed her son. If so, Claudia Mann said she would have forbidden him from driving, as she did after his first and only speeding citation in May 2003. But Mann knows her son's choices in his final three minutes killed him. Now, she tells anyone and everyone who will listen: "Fast and furious is fatal." (Morse)

Not only are the racers driving during the race at risk of death, but so are the spectators as well as the public itself on the streets. There have been many accidents and collisions involving street racers who

hit and kill pedestrians or kill cars that are driving on the street.

A question that may come to mind may be "how do all these young teens get the money for all this?" Well many get money from their parents, some parents know what is under the hood of their son or daughter's cars, but many do not know what kind of modifications these parts make to their cars and for Butler County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Richard K. Jones, this was astonishing to find out:

"What's shocked the hell out of me the most is that a lot of these parents know that their kids have this stuff on their cars - and they're OK with it," said Butler County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Richard K. Jones. "It's like saying: 'Here are the keys to this rocket. Go drive this rocket 140 miles an hour - and it's OK.'" (Morse)

Although parents may not know what type of modifications that the parts their children are buying will effect their cars, there are things that they can do to see what their children are doing. There are many devices out there that can help monitor the car and how it is being used.

Think black box: These devices can record how fast and how often a car speeds. Some

use global-positioning satellites to show a vehicle's location and speed and can call a parent's cell phone. Cost: \$140-\$1,000+. Available at some retail stores, locally through Blue Ash's RACO Industries, www.trackmyvehicle.com, and other online companies. (Morse)

Another choice that parents have for their sons or daughters are "How's my driving?: Bumper stickers that ask other drivers to report good or bad driving to a company that passes that information along to a teen's parents. Cost varies, depending on services offered, from \$19.95 to \$69.95 for a year's membership. Available through several companies, including www.gogetmom.com, www.tell-my-mom.com, www.safetycalls.com, www.dadseyes.com" (Morse). If neither of those solutions seem like the way a parent may want to go, there is the option that they can take their child's licenses away like residents in Ohio and Kentucky can:

Yank the license: Even if a teen doesn't break the law, a parent who has co-signed for a teen's driver's license has the power to get it legally revoked, either through the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles or the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. (Morse)

Not only do the parents have some control to make racing safer, but more importantly the racers themselves do. Many racers have the choice of racing

safer at the tracks. Even some former illegal street racers, like Juddi Lin, agree that it is safer to race on the track with out the worry of pedestrians, bystanders, other cars, and police . Juddi even states:

"I've been coming to Midnight Mayhem since it started. It's a great atmosphere -- there's music, you see your old friends here, and you get to race on the track all night long without a problem. No cops chasin' after you or anything. Right now, I have an '89 Honda CRX that's my race car and I have a '93 Acura Integra that's my daily driver. I also have a 300 ZX that's actually my 'just-in-case' car." (Morse)

Not only do some racers see that the track is better but even parents, like Juddi Lin's, agree with using the track as a means of racing. She says "they say, 'Okay, that's fine, you can go.' They would rather have me race at the strip than on the street" (Morse).

Although illegal street racing, seems like a fun and glamorous hobby to take up, there are a lot of dangers and serious consequences that follow along with it. "Street racing isn't anything new and it doesn't seem to be going away anytime soon" (Ko) and with that being said, racers need to take charge in how to make racing safer for themselves and for those around them. More and more people are injured or die every year due to motor vehicle accidents and collisions or because of illegal street racing:

In 2001, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that police listed street racing as a factor in 135 fatal crashes. The total was up from 72 street-racing-related fatalities reported in 2000. According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, more than 800 citations for illegal street racing were issued in 2001. In San Diego, where the street racing problem has been termed "epidemic," 16 deaths and 31 injuries were directly related to illegal street racing in 2001. The city's attorney's office prosecuted 147 illegal street racing cases in 1999, 161 in 2000, and 290 in 2001. In Florida in 2001, 7,216 citations were issued for racing on the highway. In 1999, the Florida Department of Highway and Safety for Motor Vehicles reported 28 accidents related to illegal street racing, with 2 fatalities and 27 injuries. In 2000, the agency reported 39 racing accidents, with 1 fatality and 55 injuries. In 2002, there were 48 racing accidents, 1 fatality, and 60 injuries. According to the NHTSA, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 16 and 20. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety says 5,749 teens died in the United States from motor vehicle crash injuries in 1999. Nationwide statistics show that 49 people are injured for every 1,000 who participate in illegal street racing. (Illegal Racing Statistics)

If racers do not take more responsibility and come to realize the safer route to racing, the numbers in those statistics will only increase year after year. No

matter how little the increase is, ever life wasted isn't worth anything at all, every life is important. I may want to be a street racer, but I'm no idiot. The feeling of that high adrenaline rush for a few seconds, down that quarter-mile strip zooming in and out of traffic, would not amount to all the wonderful things that you can experience in your life, and I think that is what illegal street racers need to realize.

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Unspoken words...



How long do I...

How long do I have to wait to ask you out
And show you what true love is all about
How long do I wait till I can hold your hand
To be the one u call your "man"
How long till I can look you in the eyes
And see the smile on your face
Feel the warmth of your love's embrace
How long till I can hold you in my arms
And make sure you're safe from harm
How long will it be till you're right here beside me
When will our eyes meet for the first time
When will your hand touch mine
When will I feel your touch, your love
The love of an angel from above
The feeling of your lips on my finger tips
The feeling of your face against my hand
The feeling that you trust that ill do everything
That I can to make sure you're happy
To make sure your days are fully of happiness
To make sure you have a shoulder to lean on
to make sure you are comforted when your sad
To show you if you take my hand
Ill show you the love and devotion
That you never had
So take my hand and baby tell me please
Cause when I see you, I just get weak in the knees
How long do I have to sit her and think of you
Till the day I can finally say "I love you" ...

Trying to win your heart

I found out that I'm not the only one
Who cares about You
I forgot to realize just how special you really are
That I wouldn't be the only one
To want to be with you
I had never seem to realize
What had been right in front of my eyes
An angel who had somehow fallen from the sky
I never looked at all your other qualities
It wasn't just your beauty that had caught my eye
It was your personality and your smile
The kindness of your heart
The way that by just talking or seeing u
Seem to brighten my day
Just being near u
And being able to look at u
Brings joy to my lonely days
In one way you're like
My sunshine in the rain
I don't know where my place is
In your love's embrace
I know that you're the girl of my dreams
And I do hope I win this race
This race, this game to win your heart...

Wanting you back

How many times a day, are u on my mind?
Can you help me?
What is the number for “all the time”
How amazing u are, still can’t believe it’s true
I still want to hold your hand
Be the apple of your eye
Be your man, be your guy
I still want u to be my pudding pie, the girl I hold
Can you still be my Cinderella
From bedtime story untold
Feeling like a king, but I still need my queen
Ur the queen of my heart, it’s been that way
From the start and I know you’ll always
And forever be in my heart
You could lose everything in the world,
But you’ll never lose my love,
Right now I’m so lost and confused...
Can u please tell me what to do?
Do I need to change my style? Change my hair?
Get down on my knees
And promise you I’ll always be there
Do I need to die or say good bye?
Baby I need to know
Cause I’ve fallen in love wit you...

The girl...

It's kind of hard to describe this girl that I love,
She is so beautiful so sweet,
The girl whose beauty can't be compared.
It's like she is some angel fallen from the sky
She's that certain kind of girl
That just really catches your eye
The one who u know is really one of a kind
She's the type of girl
Who just never leaves your mind
The girl that you just want to be with all the time
She's that type of girl who makes u happy
That makes u smile
The one who could actually make a guy cry
She's the type of girl that you would die for
The one that you love forever more
She's like the sunshine in the rain
And she just knows how to take away the pain
I guess for someone as special like her
She's kind of hard to describe
Especially when she's more than words

So special to me

You're the only girl I see
I believe you're so special
So precious to me
You're so kind, so sweet
The perfect girl for me
I'm so glad we have such a great connection
I just wish I could show you
All of my love's true affection
You deserve the best
Cause you're unlike the rest
You're so different from all the other girls I've met
Cause you're as beautiful as the sunset
You're the girl who's always in my head
The girl I think about at night
And when I wake up from bed
I just don't understand
Or I can't even come to comprehend
How a guy, could ever make an angel cry
That's right, I said it
I think you're an angel
Fallen from the sky, sent to down to earth
For one very lucky guy
I just hope one day
I could look into your eyes
I hope someday I could say or express
The words and feelings trapped in my heart's bay
And I'm hoping I can tell u "I love you" each day
I'm hoping one day things could be "you and me"

She's the girl..

She's the kind of Girl that you would probably only meet once in your life, the type of girl who just catches your eye, that girl who after walking by..you just always have to turn around and look back at her, the girl whose beauty is like no other, no one else can even compare. She's the kind of girl who when you look into here eyes, there's just something that makes you tingle inside, something that just makes u not want to ever look away. She's that girl who you know will always be there for you, despite the things you do. The girl who doesn't care how you look or what you can or can't do, but loves you for you. She's that girl who feel like you could last forever with, the one who you just love to hold in your arms. The one whose hand you just never want to let go. The girl who whenever you have the chance, u can't but help to kiss 238922389 times. She's that girl who you could stay up all night just looking at, watching her sleep, seeing the peacefulness in her smile as she sleeps beside you. She's the girl that I'd gladly devote my love to, the girl that I could be with forever. She's the girl who I'd change myself for, the girl that I adore, she's the girl that ill love, from now, till forever more...

I'll be there

When no one's there
For you to run to
Babe just call on me
And ill always be there
Where ever I may be
Ill always be there for you
What ever trouble you may run into
Ill be there to help u on the double
When ever you feel down
Ill always be there to take away your frown
When ever you feel pain
Ill put the sunshine in your rain
When ever you shed a tear
When ever you shed a tear
Babe don't worry, have nothing to fear
Cause ill get to you as soon as I can
Some how, some way, ill be there
When ever you get scared,
Just take my hand and hold on tight
Cause ill protect you with all my might
Girl you can always count on me
I'll always keep u safe, keep u warm
Keep u out of harms way
And show you that I love u each and everyday

What would you do?

What would you
If I told you I give up
That I just need to let go
That you're no longer the one
I want to hold
What would you do
If I told you
That I didn't want you now
That I think I could do better
That you're not the one for me
What would you do
If I told you
That this isn't bothering me
Not one single bit
That I know I can live without you
That I don't need you in my life
That I don't love you..
What would you do...

Now what would you do
If I told you that everything I said
Not one single thing I said was true
That I can't give up, I can't let go
That you're still the one I want to hold
What would you do
If I told you
That there's no one else that I want

You're all I want
That I can't do any better,
Nothing, no one can compare to you
You're so much better than a dream come true
What would you do
If I told you
That I can't live without you
That I need you in my life
Because I know something is missing
Ever since you left
I feel like I've lost a part of myself
You complete me, you complete my world
I need you now,
Will you please come back into my life
Be my so called-wife,
Cause I know if anything's for sure
You're the love of my life

Valentine

U have such a Vibrant smile
A glow within your eyes
you are as Lovely as a girl could be
I'm so happy that you're with mE
Your love, is as far as I caN see
True beauty is hidden in your eyes
And within your smIle
Ill be there for u each aNd every time
I love u and u are forEver mine
You are my one and only
You are my valentine

Happy Birthday

Today is a day
To celebrate and say
Happy birthday to you
But to say those simple words
Is too little a thing to do
For someone as beautiful and special as you
Someone who is another year wiser
Another year more beautiful
Who has another year for everyone to be blessed
With her friendship, love, and care
With the happiness
She always seems to fill in the air
So always remember that every little thing you do
Is always worth while
And hopefully when you read this
It brings something special to your day
Hopefully touches you in some way
And makes you smile
So once again, have a great day
May your day be filled with happiness and joy
And may all your wishes come true
Because today was meant for no one more lovely
Happy Birthday to you...

Finding the words to say..

I know I'm not cute as him
Probably not strong as he is
And I'm probably not the guy
That really catches your eye
Don't got the coolest hair style
Just thought I could make your time worth while
Hoping what I'm about to say
Will touch you in some way
Hopefully make you smile
Wishing I could find the words to say
That I would love you everyday
Hope that I could somehow make you see
You mean everything in the world to me
I don't know what it is about you
Just can't stop smiling when you're around
Maybe it's the happiness I've suddenly found
Ever since you showed up in my life
I try to use my heart to lead myself
And all I see is you're like nobody else
No one with the beauty to compare
Something special I feel whenever you're there
How you seem to fill the air with a special essence
Just love to be within your presence
How do I find the words to say
All the things I hold inside
The feelings I've been trying to hide
Maybe this is the only way
To express that I've been blessed
Cause an angel has come into my life

And when I look down into my heart
I think she might be the one I've been looking for
It's easy to see she's the girl I adore
So now I think its time you knew
That angel is you...

One day...

One day I just wish
That I wouldn't be so invisible to you
That one day you would finally
Notice and see me
I'm not talking about the guy you're looking at
But the guy who smiles when ever you pass by
The one who is just saddened
To see tears come down from your eyes
That guy who wants to wipe those tears away

Who will try to make do all he can
To keep you happy each and everyday
The one who will gladly do all that he can
To make sure that every moment spent with you
Will be worth while
The one who would always try to make you smile
The one who will take away
All you worries and fears

The guy who promises you that,
You'll only cry those happy tears
The guy that will do all that it takes
To make sure your heart never breaks
That guy who just wants to hold your hand
Take care of you and devote to you his time
And show you that he deserves to call you "mine"
The one who's hoping you'd give him a chance
And that you'll soon see
That everything you really need

Is standing right in front of you
Cause girl, you mean everything
Everything in the world to me...



A WHOLE NEW WORLD...

A whole new world

Imagine being an alien, and you crash land onto a distant planet. The next thing you know your ship is broken beyond repair and you have to live in this new world and adapt to live within the society, this is how I feel everyday. Day in and day out I have to go through my life feeling like I don't belong here, because that's how I live everyday: a deaf or hard of hearing kid in a hearing community, like an alien trying to live in a whole new world. Disabilities change a life, especially losing a sense. While blind people lose all vision of the world, it is still easy to communicate with the people around unlike becoming deaf. Deafness changes a whole world; it's so like life becomes a new thing, and the people around you are completely different. Losing the ability to see, touch, taste or smell is nothing like losing the sense of hearing. Deafness or becoming hard of hearing makes it almost impossible communicate with those around you that you've known for most of your life, you feel like an outsider, like an alien....

Being hard of hearing is really hard, sometimes even scary. Like in school, everyday is like a challenge. Everyday in class I have to listen really closely and take notes all at the same time. Now you may think that might be like what everyone else basically

has to do, but its not. When I mean listen really closely, I mean really, really closely because many letters and words may sound exactly the same and I may not understand the word or even the sentence. Letters like “v” and “b”, “c” and “z” or “p” and “b”, are difficult to distinguish when I miss out on a word, I might have to try to make up the sentence in my head and figure out what exactly what was said like an alien who was learning to communicate with those around him, he might understand some things but not completely everything or he might be trying to make things up as he hears them. When I take notes as opposed to someone who isn’t hard of hearing, it’s a whole new thing. Not only do you have to take notes, but figure out what it is that you hear and make sure it is the right thing you hear, its not just sitting there and listening to the teacher lecture and writing down what they say. Think of it as like an alien with a job in our world, he’s probably never seen any of these things before and wouldn’t know what everything is because its all new to him; it’s a whole different ball game. The scary part about being hard of hearing is that noises are even hard to distinguish apart from one another. Most of the time in the parking lot I can not tell if a car is coming up from behind me because of all the other noises I hear and it’s even scarier because I am completely deaf in one ear. I can’t hear if a car is coming up on my left side walking down the parking lot or if anyone is coming up on my left side completely. I have been through many experiences where someone is trying to talk to

me on my left side, but I don't even know they were there until they finally tap me on the shoulder or someone tells me someone is trying to talk to me. Like an alien trying to communicate with my thoughts, I try different techniques to express myself, like reading lips, or I might carry a pen or pencil and paper with me so people could write down what they say to me. Often I wish for something that I know I can't have, like being able to hear like everyone else can, like that alien who crash lands on a distant planet with no way to get home.

Another way I could relate being deaf to being an alien is when I feel out of place. It's not just like feeling out of place at certain times; it's more like feeling out of place every second, of every minute, of everyday, of every week, of every month, of every year. When I talk to my friends, I could stand there all day listening to what everyone is talking about but never actually hear a word they said. Suddenly, everyone is laughing about something that I am excluded from. Makes it even worse when I want to talk to everyone, but I don't know what exactly to say because all I am wondering is "What is everyone talking about," or "What did he/she just say," or "What's so funny?" I can ask people to repeat things, but sometimes I'd rather just hear things when they are said or laugh with everyone else and not feel like some alien hearing with a translator with a 10 second delay trying to desperately hear and understand what people are saying around me. Not only is it hard to talk to friends but it's also hard to learn in school: like

in an English class, where you have a group discussion or if someone says something when the teacher calls on them. In a group discussion in class I don't know what anyone else says, and if the teachers taking points based on your participation, well, yeah, I'm basically screwed right? Or how about when people are called upon in class to answer a question you don't know? Well for me, that happens and I still don't get the answer a lot of times, I will ask the teacher but sometimes it just really gets annoying when I could have just heard it from what the other student said. I even feel like an alien in school everyday because of the microphone I use with my teachers; I need a special device just to listen to everyone. No one else in the school has one, I mean I love it, for the most part because I can hear really well when someone talks into it, but it's the process involved in making it work. Like every first day of a new class, I have to go and explain how to use it to the teacher, standing up there with him/her as he/she tries to get things right while all the other students in the class watch. All of them probably thinking, "What's going on, what's that thing for?" I mean for once I'd like to just step into a new class on the first day not having to worry about will my teacher use it, will they have a problem with it, or sometimes I even just wish I didn't have to deal with it and just get into class and sit and relax until the teacher decides to start class just like every other kid around me.

Not only does being hard of hearing make me feel like an alien at times but the way I act makes me

feel like an alien. Many times I find myself hiding behind a mask like an alien might change his appearance or act a certain way to fit in with the people around him/her. I know people might have their own "masks," but you'll never have a mask like a hard of hearing person would have. When a hard of hearing person is in a group and people say something funny, it doesn't take the hilarious comment for them to laugh out loud, all it takes is the fact that the people around them are laughing. But this is exactly how a lot of hard of hearing people may react in this case and I know this is true because I do this frequently. Other times when people talk to me I might just say "yeah" or "no" when they say something to me and act like I know what they are saying without ever hearing a word they say. Like alien, I hide behind my feelings, behind my mask. Sure I may look like being hard of hearing is a breeze through my day, but step into my shoes for a day and really try to understand. Then again that's a pretty unrealistic thing to do, now isn't it? You could never really "step into my shoes" and really understand this frustrating and disturbing foreign land. "A smile is worth a thousand lies," you could see me look like the happiest person in the world but deep down you'd never know that I wish I could be that person right beside me, wishing I could hear just like the people surrounding me, wishing I could be the same as everyone just like an alien, wanting to fit into a new world.

To walk in my shoes, too hard a thing to do.
You could not go through all the hardships I go

through everyday as I get up from bed, to be treated differently as if you were an alien, to feel like you just didn't be long at times or to feel and hear the real empty sounds of life. So to some all this up, in a few words, if you'd really like to know what it feels like to be me, read this again and again, and try to understand what life is like to be me. An alien in a whole new world, an every day teenager trying to live his life but missing out on the simple pleasures of hearing the words of the world around him. "A smile is worth a thousand lies," so remember, you might see me smile, but my whole world could be crashing down inside, because when you feel like you really are an alien, what more can you do than hide?

So you see, this is the story of my life or as far as much of it has gone by. Guess its time for you to leave, but check in again, cause with every new day, there's always something new to learn, something new to earn. Another chance for a miracle to happen, and another chance to start things new..