Take safety into your own hands

BY JEANA BABCOCK

Tomorrow is my second son, Jayden’s, 16th birthday. Where has the time gone? It seems parents with grown children warn you that the time goes quickly but you really don’t believe it until it happens to you. Then with big milestones such as this, it hits you like a ton of bricks! My baby is 16 (insert a gasp and a few tears)!

Sixteen is a big one my friends. Not because he’s now taller than me or because he’s sharp as a whip—but because this young man is about ready to obtain his driver’s license. Over the past year he’s been driving with his father or I in the passenger seat and we have seen him improve. My question is, is he ready to be on his own behind the wheel? And is he ready to do this in the midst of winter?

But there are more questions swirling around in my mind—all having to do with the safety of my son. Is he going to be a responsible driver in the absence of parental presence? Who ultimately decides if he is ready to be on his own? Is the DMV who is about ready to administer the basic road test for competence? Is it so thorough that they can test him in hazardous conditions to ensure he will respond properly to all of the possibilities that may arise? Is he ready to be on his own? Do you have his back?

By Jeana Babcock

How do I know? Because even though I may have been told this before, I didn’t fully listen to my own advice and have experienced my son taking on some of the habits I exhibited and wasn’t even paying attention to myself. How hypocritical of me! I’ve since “pulled the plank out of my eye” and fully realized the gravity of the phrase “as I see it and not as I do.” It does not work. Period. As childish as it sounds, the phrase that will ring true is this: “monkey see, monkey do.”

Once you have bought into this, it’s time to be an aware monkey: whether you are a parent, grandparent or any driver, you can be sure there is someone watching your skills and likely a teen is among them. Before we move forward into discussions about proper driving, is the last time you evaluated your driving skills? The majority of us have not taken a course on driving since we first sat behind a wheel when we were fifteen. Because formal continued education is lacking, when new laws develop or new roadways emerge, how much learning have we received that every time you drive a motor vehicle, you already know what I am present discussing about! How do I know? Because even though there are many contributing factors to each accident—some beyond our control, But imagine how these numbers could plummet!

Let’s begin a responsible driving series together. Join with me in the upcoming months as we explore how to become better drivers. Get ready to learn new things … or if you already know what I am presenting, share them with others so that we can together make the roadways safer. As we embrace the importance of excellent driving behaviors, we will be better equipped to be responsible driver and exhibit superb driving skills to our youth, imagine how these numbers could plummet!

Have you ever considered that every time you drive a motor vehicle, it is likely the riskiest thing you will do in any given day? Do you know how many traffic related motorist fatalities there were YTD as of December 2, 2015, in Minnesota alone? 365. That is at least one death per day! Maybe this doesn’t seem very high to you but what if that one death was your spouse or your child or your friend? And if motorist education was increased, how might it have saved the life of someone you love?

With such a fatality rate, do you wonder why continued education is not mandatory? Sure there are many contributing factors to each accident—one beyond our control. But imagine the benefit of continually being educated on the factors that are within our control. And as you become more equipped to be a responsible driver and exhibit superb driving skills to our youth, imagine how these numbers could plummet!

Article courtesy of Babcock Auto Care.