

# GOODSPEED MUSICALS

## AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

*the unauthorized autobiography of*



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**THE UNAUTHORIZED  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF  
SAMANTHA BROWN**

The Norma Terris Theatre  
August 4 - 28, 2011

BY  
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&  
BRIAN LOWDERMILK**

BASED ON AN IDEA BY  
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# THE STORY

## SYNOPSIS

It is dawn on the day that Samantha Brown is supposed to leave for college. She sits in her car with her bags packed, but she can't turn the key in the ignition. She is filled with doubts as the defining moments from her senior year flash through her mind. Somehow Samantha has to come to terms with her parents' expectations, her first love, and a lost friendship before she can turn the key and make the first decision of her adult life.

## CHARACTER SUMMARY

**Samantha Brown** is an eighteen-year-old high school valedictorian. An ambitious, hard worker, Sam has always assumed that she could do anything in the world once she puts her mind to it. But after failing her driver's test three times, Sam starts to wonder how true that really is.

**Kelly** is Samantha's best friend. She's a year older than Sam and everything that Sam's not – outspoken, spontaneous, and completely unafraid of life. She also happens to be a fantastic driver. Kelly coasted and joked her way through high school but she rapidly changes in her freshman year of college, making Sam doubt the strength of their friendship.

**Adam** is Sam's boyfriend. He is 2 years older than Samantha and works as a mechanic in his dad's tire shop. Adam and Sam seem like an unlikely pair but after three years, they're still completely in love. The only problem in paradise is that Sam's still a virgin and the sexual tension between them is reaching a breaking point.

**Bev Brown** is Samantha's mom. She is eager to reconnect with Sam before she heads off to college but Sam is preoccupied. She hopes that Sam will go to Dartmouth University, which is her alma mater.

**Jared Brown** is Sam's dad. Jared Brown literally wrote the book on driving safety and he has made it his personal mission to teach Sam how to drive. Unfortunately, his primary teaching tactic is to bombard Sam with a barrage of terrifying statistics while she's on the road. He hopes that Sam will go to Harvard University, which is his alma mater.



Catherine Porter, Stephen Bogardus, Meghann Fahy, Andrew Durand, Melissa Bernošt, Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

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With contributions by Kait Kerrigan

# MEET THE WRITERS

## Kerrigan & Lowdermilk

**KAIT KERRIGAN** is a book writer, playwright, and lyricist based in New York City. Kerrigan majored in English Literature at Barnard College and graduated in 2003. In 2009, she won the Edward Kleban Award for having the most promising potential as a librettist and lyricist in American Musical Theatre. Her plays include *Imaginary Love*, *Her Old Possessions*, *Tender Wars in the Green-Gold Room*, and *Transit*. *Imaginary Love* was a 2006 Princess Grace Award Finalist.

**BRIAN LOWDERMILK** is an American musical theatre composer and lyricist. He is also an accomplished music director, arranger, vocal coach, and pianist. Brian studied at Harvard University and New York University. With collaborator Marcus Stevens, Lowdermilk was the recipient of the Richard Rodgers Staged Reading Award for his musical *RED*. He was also the recipient of an Alan Menken scholarship award from NYU and a Jonathan Larson Memorial Fellowship from the Dramatists Guild.

### **KERRIGAN-LOWDERMILK**

Together, Kerrigan and Lowdermilk have created several musicals such as, *The Woman Upstairs*, *The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown*, and *Wrong Number*. They are currently working on an adaptation of *Henry and Mudge*, which premiered off-Broadway in 2006 at the Lucille Lortel Theatre and is now touring the country with Theatreworks USA.

In 2011 Brian Lowdermilk and Kait Kerrigan released their first CD *Our First Mistake*. The album was made in response to years of fans requesting recordings of Lowdermilk and Kerrigan's music.



# AUTHOR'S NOTES

## By Kait Kerrigan

### **Tell us about your inspirations.**

Brian likes to say that *The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown* is a cross between *The Fantasticks* and *High School Musical* and I think that's pretty accurate, but I'll throw in a couple more heady influences. Works that have influenced us on this particular project (to name just a few) include *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, *Special Topics in Calamity Physics* by Marisha Pessl, *The Dead* by James Joyce and a whole slew of other Modernist novels that celebrate the elevation of small piercing life-changing moments, *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, "Veronica Mars" by Rob Thomas and other awesome TV writers, and *A Year in Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion. Our musical influences are an unholy mix of the Indigo Girls, Meatloaf, all of our musical theater heroes, and recently our singer-songwriter friends.

### **Talk a bit about the collaboration and how the show came about.**

The germ for *The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown* came when Brian was a freshman in college. He was in his first semester at Harvard and found himself wondering how he got there. A year later, he was a sophomore at NYU and had written the first draft of a musical called *The Wheel* about a bright and ambitious girl named Sam who decides not to go to college.

It was around that time that I entered the picture. When Brian moved to New York City, he heard that I was studying at Barnard. We'd known each other through our theater group Young People's Theatre Workshop but we weren't friends. He heard I was writing plays and I'd heard some of his music and liked it. We immediately began writing a show called *The Woman Upstairs*. When we finished our first draft and presented it at the first New York Musical Theatre Festival, we started looking for a new project. Brian asked me to take a look at his first draft of *The Wheel*. I read it and, while I understood why he wanted to write it, I didn't understand what the broader appeal of the show was. We spent the next couple weeks figuring out how Sam Brown could be a more universal character. How was her struggle to come of age not only relevant to someone like Brian who had experienced her plight exactly, but to someone like me for whom going to Barnard was the prize at the end of a long academic and financial struggle?

I don't think we fully achieved that universality until we wrote the last song in the show, several drafts and several years later. I remember sitting in the audience during one of the first performances of "Remember This." I was twenty-eight years old and far away from that first adult decision regarding college. I remember

being at yet another crossroad in my personal life – realizing that I could do the easy thing that made sense or the hard one that felt right. I listened to the lyric I'd written and found myself looking for the courage that we'd imbued in this now-universal character.

*The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown* isn't about college. It's about growing up. It's about learning that with the freedom to do anything comes the responsibility to do something. It's about a moment that you experience for the first time when you're eighteen but it's a moment you experience again and again over the course of your life.

### **Tell us what you hope to accomplish here at Goodspeed.**

I had a wonderful conversation with a friend of mine who is an archeologist. He described being on a dig and building a camp fire. As they were digging the campfire hole, far from the dig site, they uncovered an important artifact. Suddenly, looking back at the site, they realized that it was three times the size they originally imagined. When you start writing a musical, it feels a lot like being on an archeological dig. You think you know what you're uncovering but there's a lot of guesswork and sometimes you realize that what you set out to write is actually a lot bigger than you anticipated.

We've been lucky enough to have several developmental steps before we even set foot on Goodspeed soil, so we've figured out the size and shape of our "dig" and now we're dealing with making sure that we have everything polished and ready for the exhibition! We all hope to learn a lot about the physical world of our show and how we can bring out even more theatricality in the piece. We want to do everything we can to support our director Danny Goldstein's vision. All the while, we're keeping our eye on the first ten minutes of the piece, which is always the hardest. We want to make sure that we're really establishing the tone of the show so that the audience's expectations are met and exceeded by the time the lights come up at the end.

### **Tell us what the audience can expect to see.**

I think it's fair to say that the audience will be surprised. The show appears to be about something small when it begins but it grows and deepens as Samantha changes over the course of the show. The audiences can also expect some unbelievable performances both from the actors and from the band. We already have relationships with many of the actors and band members, and we count them as some of the best in the business.

# SAMANTHA BROWN'S GUIDE TO GROWING UP

If you're reading this, you are probably my mother because I can't imagine who else really wants to know the details of my life.

MOM, PUT THIS DOWN AND GO BACK TO SCRAPBOOKING.

PLEASE AND THANK YOU.

If you're not my mother, then welcome to my life story! Every story needs a beginning and mine is the start of senior year of high school. Back when I thought I had everything going for me - great grades, overbearingly supportive parents, a loving boyfriend, and a best friend who cheered me on every step of the way.

But preparing for college was still difficult. It was almost as difficult as a driver's test, and I promise you: I am a horrible driver.

Looking back on my senior year, I wish that someone had written me a guide on dealing with the challenges of growing up. And I don't mean a Wikipedia article.

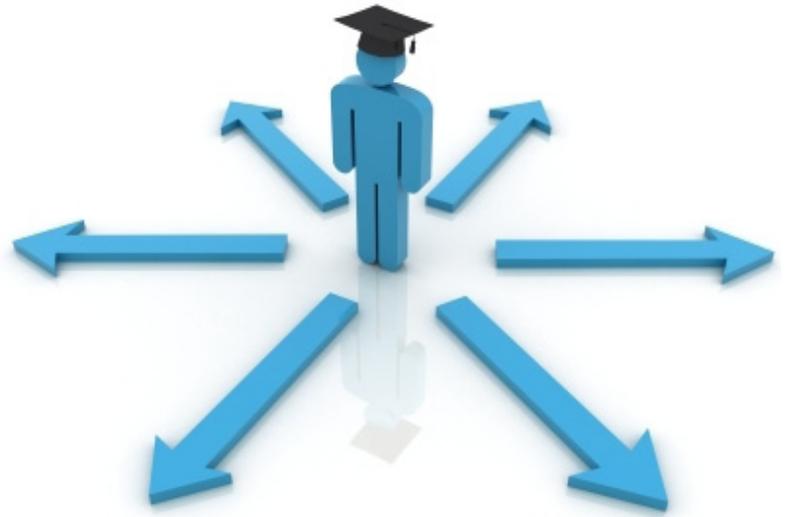
So, I've taken what I've learned and written a guide for you that refers to my experiences: choosing a college, surviving my parents, being a good friend, and even learning how to drive. (In order to handle the first three, it's important to escape on occasion.)

I'm still trying to figure out my future so who knows how helpful this is, but here goes!



# Choosing a College That's Right for You

Choosing a college is stressful, but it's easier if you remember one thing: you are the one going to college, not your parents. Parents might think they're helping when they get over-involved in the decision process, but at the end of the day, it's your life and you have to remember that. I've listed some things I looked for in a college.



One piece of advice before we begin: It's best to start this process as early as possible, ideally in your junior year of high school.

## Step 1: Determine what you might like to study or major in at college.

- I realize that most students enter college as "undecided," which is totally fine, but if you are able to find a college that offers classes, clubs, and activities in some of your areas of interest then that might be a good place for you!

## Step 2: Develop a list of criteria you want to use to evaluate and weed out colleges.

- Do you want to live close to home or far away?
- Do you want a large university or a small college?
- Do you have a budget or a cost limit?

Here is a list of some common criteria to consider while looking for a college:

- Degrees offered
- Majors/minors
- Location (rural or urban setting)
- Distance from home
- Size of the student population (from small at 1,000 to large at 35,000+)
- Public vs. Private
- Costs (tuition, room and board, etc.)
- Financial assistance packages
- Campus resources (labs, libraries, computer access, etc.)
- Graduation rate/time
- Placement success/internship and co-op programs
- Accreditation
- Class size
- Faculty contact/classes taught by full-time qualified faculty
- Quality/reputation/ranking
- Safety (campus, community)
- Student body (diversity, gender, etc.)
- Social life (Greek organizations, sports, activities, clubs, school spirit, etc.)
  - Religious affiliation
  - Housing options (dorms, apartments, living at home)
- Selectivity

## Step 3: Compile a list of possible colleges and universities.

- With at least some of the criteria that are important to you, begin the gathering phase! You can find college information in books, on websites, and from your high school teachers and guidance counselors. You should also consider attending college fairs where you can actually meet representatives from various schools, as well as gather useful literature.

# Choosing a College That's Right for You

**Step 4: Gather as many resources and as much information that you can find about each school that you are considering.**

- If you don't have all the information that you need on a particular college, you should consider visiting the college's website. Most colleges offer some sort of virtual tour, so you can get a look at the college from your computer.

**Step 5: Use the criteria from Step 2 to narrow your list of colleges to a manageable number.**

- This number will vary based on how many schools you and your family are able to visit. My guidance counselor suggested that I narrow my list to ten or fewer colleges.

**Step 6: Visit the colleges on your list from Step 5.**

- The best way to really get a feel for a college is by visiting the campus, taking a tour, meeting with students, attending a class, reading the campus newspaper, eating in the cafeteria, and spending the night in a dorm. You have to feel "at home" at the place where you will spend the next two to four years of your life, so visiting is important! If some schools on your list are just too far away to make a trip, then at least take a virtual tour of the campus and try to talk to people who have attended the school to get a feel for it.

**Step 7: Apply to the schools that made the cut after the first six steps.**

- Most teens generally apply to one or two dream or "reach" schools, two to four schools where they want to go, and at least one "safety" school.

**Step 8: While you're waiting to hear back from the colleges that you applied to, start hitting the books and the web to find scholarships.**

**Step 9: Make a final choice among the schools that accepted you.**

- If you applied for financial aid, take a close look at the offers. If the school you really want to attend gave you a low aid offer, you should consider contacting the school to make a counter-offer and see what happens; many schools have become more willing to negotiate in this area.

**These were some of my favorite websites that helped me choose which schools to apply to**

- [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
- [www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html)
- [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com)
- [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)
- [www.collegesource.org](http://www.collegesource.org)
- [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

**These were some of my favorite websites that helped me find financial aid**

- [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- [www.collegescholarships.com](http://www.collegescholarships.com)
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)

**These were some of my favorite websites that helped me find scholarships**

- [www.college-scholarships.com](http://www.college-scholarships.com)
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.absolutelyscholarships.com](http://www.absolutelyscholarships.com)

# A Little Help from Your Friends

To quote C.S. Lewis, "friendship has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that gives value to survival." My best friend Kelly would call me a complete dweeb right now, but I still love her anyway. Friends can get on your nerves sometimes but the best of friends are there you when it really counts. With a best friend, you can talk on the phone until three a.m., share your secrets, and laugh over inside jokes that no one else would understand. With a long conversation or a fast road trip, Kelly could make me feel better instantly.

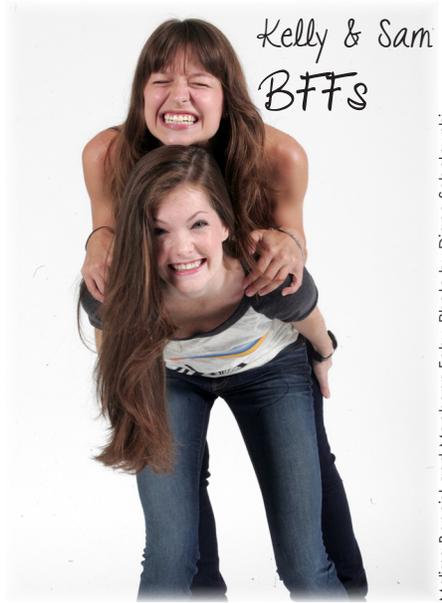


Photo by Diane Sobolewski

## TOP 10 BEST FRIENDS OF ALL TIME



10. Calvin and Hobbes



9. J.D. and Turk



8. Sex and the City



7. Frodo and Samwise



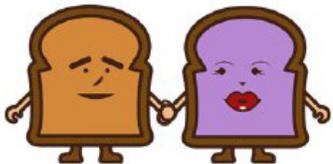
6. Harry and Ron



5. Celebrities and Bad Decisions



4. Elliot and E.T.



5. Peanut Butter and Jelly



2. Thelma and Louise



1. Samantha Brown and Kelly Manning (Duh!)

Photo by Diane Sobolewski

# A Little Help from Your Friends

## FRIENDSHIP QUIZ

Keeping friends is almost as difficult as making them. This short assessment can tell you if you have the right attitude to be a good friend. The examples below are completely hypothetical (obviously).

1. Your best friend (let's pretend her name is Kelly) is in need of an Arby's fix. Arby's isn't exactly your fare but she's feeling down. Your response is:
  - a. "Tonight, we dine in Arby's! Bring on the roast beef."
  - b. "I'm not a fan of red meat, but I'll join you for some curly fries."
  - c. "I don't think the South Beach Diet includes liquid meat. How about a smoothie?"
2. It's Saturday night and you have plans with your friend, the fictional Kelly. Your boyfriend (let's pretend his name is Adam) calls last minute for some boardgame fun. You haven't seen Kelly in a month but you've had these plans for a while. Your response is:
  - a. "Adam, I can't tonight. I'll ask Kelly if you can come."
  - b. "Kelly, I'm so sorry but Adam and I haven't played Jenga in a while. No, that is not a euphemism. I'll make it up to you."
  - c. "Kels, can't come. will explain later. tower falling. Sent from my iPhone."
3. Fictional Kelly is feeling unwell due to totally non-alcohol related reasons. Your response is:
  - a. "Give me ten minutes. I'll bring the Alka Seltzer Morning Relief and vitamin B6 supplements."
  - b. "Oh no! Hydrate and stay in bed. Hang in there!"
  - c. "Does this mean you can't make it to brunch?"
4. You visit Harvard University with your family. You bring back a gift for fictional Kelly:
  - a. A wonderfully warm Harvard sweatshirt
  - b. A keychain
  - c. A link to pictures of you and the John Harvard statue
5. On one of many road trips with fictional Kelly, she dares you to hit on someone at a biker bar. You do, foolishly, and the biker says he would prefer your friend. You tell Kelly:
  - a. "Kelly, it's your lucky day! He thinks you are, in his words, 'smokin'."
  - b. "Oh, he just wasn't interested."
  - c. "Well, that guy must be blind."

***If you answered with mostly a's, then congrats! You have the makings of a great friend.***

***If you answered with mostly b's, then don't worry. You are rough around the edges but in no time, you will find a fictional Kelly of your own.***

***If you answered with mostly c's, you might need a remedial class on friendship etiquette. Nobody's perfect but perhaps you should try to work on your social graces.***

# My Dad the Statistician

My dad's a statistician so the odds of him knowing random facts are 1:1, which for the mathematically challenged is 100%.

## SOME OF MY FAVORITE STATISTICS OF ALL TIME

- Odds of getting away with murder: 2 to 1
- Odds of being an astronaut: 13,200,000 to 1
- Odds of being killed sometime in the next year in any sort of transportation accident: 77 to 1
- Odds of being considered possessed by Satan: 7,000 to 1
- Odds of being on plane with a drunken pilot: 117 to 1
- Odds of finding out your child is a genius: 250 to 1
- Odds of winning an Academy Award: 11,500 to 1
- Odds of spotting a UFO today: 3,000,000 to 1
- Odds of becoming a saint: 20,000,000 to 1
- Chance that Earth will experience a catastrophic collision with an asteroid in the next 100 years: 5000 to 1



# Surviving a College Relationship

My mother, in her overbearing yet deeply caring way, wants to know everything about my relationship with Adam. She asks me questions about him all the time and really tries to get me to open up. I know she's just trying to be supportive, but I don't think she understands what it's like to be in a relationship with a boy who has already graduated from high school.

In an effort to help with all the changes in my life, my mom gave me an article with tips on how Adam and I can have a successful relationship while I am away at college. Some of it's kind of helpful but take it with a grain of salt. It's coming from my mom, after all.



## MAKE TIME FOR EACH OTHER

Even if the distance in your relationship can be closed by a few hours worth of driving, you're not always going to be able to enjoy in-person visits. As the year progresses, you will both likely be busy with work, classes, activities, and making new friends. It's important for you both to be supportive of each other as you adjust to college life, so don't be resentful if your partner starts spending less time communicating with you and more time doing other things.

However, you will need to make time to maintain your closeness. Respond to your partner's texts, calls and emails within a matter of hours, rather than days. If in-person visits are impossible, make a standing appointment for a phone call or online chat. Investing a few uninterrupted hours a week on close communication can really help both partners feel close and connected in spite of distance.

## BE THOUGHTFUL

If you see a picture of something that will make your partner laugh, or find something affordable in a shop that he or she would like, send it to him or her. Thoughtful gestures don't have to be elaborate – little gestures go a long way. Ask about how your partner is doing, and try to remember and inquire about details like new friends and classes that he or she particularly likes. If you read something in a class that might interest your partner, tell him or her about it. If your partner complains about feeling sick, ask if he or she is feeling better the next day. Remembering these smaller personal details is a great way to show how much you care. And of course, birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries are essential to remember. If you can't afford a gift, send a free e-card or an email with a bunch of YouTube videos you think your partner will like.

If you try these strategies, I think your relationship will make it through the tough times! I'm not saying it is going to be easy and I'm not saying it won't test you and your significant other, but if you're dedicated to one another, you will find a way to make it work.

## ESTABLISH TRUST

Trust is especially important in a long distance relationship. Even if you're not the jealous type, there's often a lingering fear that your significant other might cheat on you. Though fear is normal, allowing it to dominate conversations and interactions can destroy a relationship. If you trust your partner, though, this fear can take a backseat, allowing for calm and happiness in your interactions.

One important part of establishing trust is to be open and honest in your communication. Tell your partner what you plan on doing over the weekend before it happens to avoid any worry or hurt feelings. Establishing this type of communication helps both people in the relationship feel included in their significant other's life, and this feeling of inclusion is a great way to maintain closeness.

Another essential part of establishing trust is recognizing and dealing with jealousy as soon as it rears its head. If you see the same attractive person near your significant other in multiple Facebook photos and start to feel yourself becoming suspicious, ask your partner about that person. It could be that your partner doesn't even know or like that random person. Don't go behind your partner's back and try to gather information on your own. This can lead to petty, irrational fights over false accusations. Always keep an open line of communication, and be honest. After all, it's not fair to expect your boyfriend or girlfriend to be honest with you if you're not going to do the same with them.

# My Way on the Highway: A Parents' Guide to Driving Safety

By Jared Brown

My dad wrote this book about teaching teenagers how to drive; I think he based all the examples on me. And since I was the worst driver of all time, just about every bad thing a teenage driver can do, I did... and is in his book. If you are about to learn how to drive or if you are about to teach someone how to drive, you should read this snippet from my dad's guide. It could save you from being deemed hopeless by the DMV.



## FOR THE DRIVER

**Steering:** Steer smoothly whether you are driving straight ahead, turning or backing up.

**Acceleration:** Accelerate smoothly and moderately. Don't race the engine or cause it to stall.

**Braking:** Bring the vehicle to a stop gently. Start braking well before your stopping position to avoid "jerky" stops.

**Clutch/Gear:** Always be sure your vehicle is in the correct gear. With either an automatic or a manual transmission, shift into the proper gear at the right time without "grinding" the gears.

**Speed:** Obey the posted speed limit, of course, but also adjust your speed properly due to weather, road, visibility, and traffic conditions.

**Following Distance:** Keep an adequate space "cushion" between your vehicle and those you are following. Use the "two second rule" described in the Driver's Manual. Be sure to increase your following distance in poor weather or visibility.

**Traffic Control Devices:** Know the meanings of signs, signals and pavement markings, and obey them consistently.

**Stopping Position:** If a stop is required, stop your vehicle before it reaches an intersecting street. If stop lines or crosswalks are present, stop before crossing them. If your view is blocked after stopping behind the crosswalk, move up until you can clearly see your way, then stop again before pulling into traffic.

**Lane Selection and Position:** Keep your vehicle in the proper traffic lane, especially when preparing to make turns. Don't allow room for another vehicle to pass you on the side that you are turning toward.

**Communication:** Let other drivers and pedestrians know which way you want to go. Use your directional signals or horn at the proper times.

**Observation:** Look for and identify potential problems or hazards in the traffic around you - not just straight ahead, but behind you and on either side. Check your mirrors frequently, but be sure to look over your shoulder behind you when changing lanes or backing up.

**Anticipate and React to Others:** Anticipate possible driving errors by others and be ready to react safely to make up for their mistakes.

# My Way on the Highway: A Parents' Guide to Driving Safety

By Jared Brown

## FOR THE TEACHER

**Keep Your Cool:** Practice what you preach. Remember, new drivers learn by example, too. Your behavior behind the wheel is probably more influential than the driving techniques you teach. Loud voices and big gestures are distracting. If you get angry, calmly instruct your teen to pull off the road.

**Be Proactive:** Long before your new driver actually gets behind the wheel, you can help him or her become aware of safe driving practices. Lead by example.

**Set Some Ground Rules:** When it's time for your new driver to start driving, set time limits, speed limits, road restrictions and other rules before you start the car.

**Practice:** In areas that are open and safe, practice starting, accelerating, turning, stopping and backing up. Remember that good driving habits must become natural which will only happen after months and months on the road.

**Plan:** Map your route. Have your new driver practice advance route planning before you start driving.

**Prepare for Emergencies:** Discuss emergency procedures. Talk about a variety of emergency situations and keep important phone numbers in the car.

**Observe and Learn:** Have your new driver point out good and bad driving behaviors by other drivers.

**Give Positive Reinforcement:** Compliments can help cement good driving behavior. It always helps to know when you are doing something correctly.

**Seat Belts:** Insist on wearing seat belts. New young drivers use seatbelts less than adults. Instill the importance of wearing seat belts at all times, whether as a passenger or a driver.

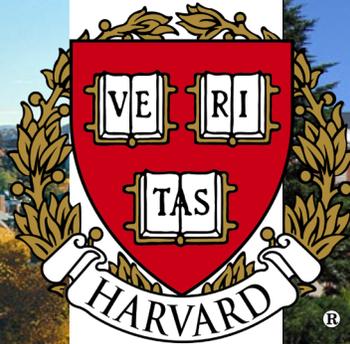


# Mrs. Brown's Scrapbook

My mom likes scrapbooking. She's kind of obsessed with it. She enjoys preserving our family history by keeping all types of memorabilia, including photographs, ticket stubs, fabrics, old invitations, Christmas cards, and stickers. She says it's a way of keeping memories alive. I think it's just her way of making sure that she can always embarrass me. Here's a page from her scrapbook which shows some of her favorite colleges that we have visited. As you'll note, my mom is very open-minded about where I should go to college. As long as it's her alma mater.



**Dartmouth**



**COLUMBIA**  
UNIVERSITY

