



LOOK AND LEARN

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He once saw a young woman so engrossed in sending a text message that she walked across the road without looking up and slammed right into a power pole. The power of observation, says Hobart driving instructor Perry Wisniewski, can be the difference between life and death.

"I believe observation is the most important thing," Wisniewski told *TasWeekend*.

When a new student gets into his car, the first thing the 63-year-old shows them is his phone. "I switch it off in front of them and then put it in the centre console so it's not a distraction," he says. Then he looks them in the eyes and tells them that it only takes a two-second distraction to cause an accident.

He has been teaching teenagers to drive for almost two decades and says he's had a number of near misses. "You are always on high alert and you are looking ahead — all the — time! And you are thinking about all the what-if scenarios."

He says he is shocked at how many people walk or drive while texting. "How can you possibly be switched on and ready to drive if you are texting?"

Wisniewski says many drivers didn't know that texting while at the traffic lights was against the law. "I know a policeman who stands at traffic lights and watches people stop and then pick up their phone and text," Wisniewski says. "He taps on their window and as he's writing out their ticket they proclaim 'but I'm not driving' — but they are still in control of a car."

He says good driving is all about looking well ahead and not just to the car directly in front of you. "I will have a student in the car and they will be driving down the road and I will say 'the driver five cars ahead is about to open the right door'," Wisniewski says. "And they will say 'how did you know that was going to happen?'"

His answer: "Observation".



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