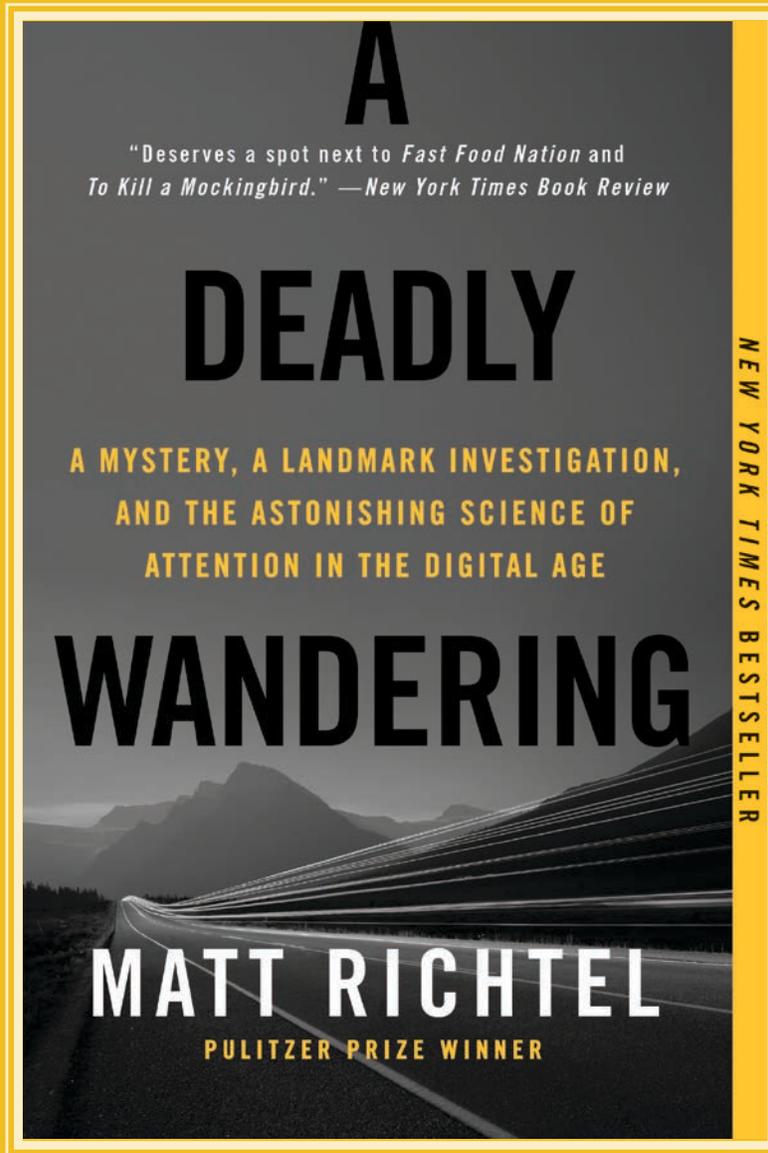

STUDY GUIDE



by Peter J. Papadakos, MD, FCCM, FAARC

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Testing Resources

- Ask your students to take a [quick quiz](#) to test students' pre-existing knowledge of the dangers of texting while driving.
- Test with this [multiple-choice test](#) your students' comprehension after they have read *A Deadly Wandering*.

Introduction

As a critical care physician who specializes in the care of trauma patients, I am confronted daily with a growing number of accidents caused by distracted behavior. Throughout the U.S., there has been an increase in accidents where the core cause was distraction via a personal electronic device (PED), be it while driving or even walking. The use of these devices has become a part of daily life, with over 90% of Americans using one.

In a current study from the Pew Research Center, 88% of American teens have access to a mobile phone of some kind, and a majority of teens (73%) have smartphones. The study found that 92% of teens report going online “almost constantly,” with 56% of teens reporting they go online several times a day. These wired individuals not only use texting—with a typical teen sending and receiving 30 texts per day—but utilize other forms of real-time communication such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Kik and WhatsApp, to name a few. Startlingly, these behaviors are regularly taking place behind the wheel. A recent survey by the AAA Foundation found that 27% of drivers age 16 to 65 report using Facebook behind the wheel, while 14% of motorists use twitter and 17% take selfies.

This widespread form of non-verbal communication technology and the need to respond to the device have increased our eyes-off-the-road time, which greatly increases risk of accident. A crash is 23 times more likely when the driver is text messaging; 2.8 times more likely when dialing the phone; 1.4 times more likely when reaching for the device; and 1.3 times more likely when talking or listening on the phone.

States and governmental agencies have attempted to control the use of such technology while driving. 39 states plus D.C. prohibit all drivers from texting, 32 states plus D.C. prohibit novice drivers from cell phone use, and ten states plus D.C. prohibit all drivers from using handheld cell phones. Despite this legislative action, motorist multitasking has continued to increase and do have the number of crashes, injuries and fatalities. In short, the problem is getting worse, not better.

In 2012 alone, 3,328 people were killed, and 421,000 people injured in crashes involving a distracted driver. This data does not address a parallel growing phenomenon of injuries caused by distracted pedestrians walking into roads, falling off train platforms and other accidents.

This constant need to interact with handheld technology has not only impacted physical injury, but has also led to many other negative behaviors. Attention to school and work-related tasks has been widely reported to have dropped. Even in the practice of medicine, a field based on close observation and focus, the phenomenon of “distracted doctoring” has been identified.

Matt Richtel, through this book, intertwines the narrative of an accident that kills two rocket scientists with hard scientific information from leading experts on how technology affects human behavior. Using accessible neuroscience and story-telling, the book explains how interactive gadgets can be so irresistible as to hijack attention and focus. The book also offers a chance to examine profound questions about right and wrong, the responsibility we have to our families, faith and our community, the idea of heroism, and the role of police, courts and politicians in dealing with murky areas of policy and law. The seamless integration of the scientific and the personal will draw your students into a story that should have lasting effects on their lives.

—Dr. Peter Papadakos

1. Lenhart, Amanda, Pew Research Center, April 2015. “Teen Social Media and Technology Overview 2015.”

Chapter 1

Our story begins in 2006 when nineteen-year-old Reggie Shaw has his life turned around. He comes from a normal American family. He is a boy of faith, heavily involved in his church. While he has spent his life preparing for his Mormon Mission, he recently confessed to having sex with his girlfriend (after having lied previously), which temporarily rules out his Mission trip. This has greatly upset his parents.

Reggie deals with the embarrassment in his tightly knit Mormon Community. He begins to work at a company in the next community. He leaves for work on September 12 at 6:15am and travels his regular route. He stops at a gas station to fill his tank. Following him from the gas station is John Kaiserman in his truck. John is concerned about the erratic driving he witnesses, which he deems dangerous.

Driving in the opposite direction are two scientists, Jim Furfaro, the driver, and his colleague, Keith O'Dell, both men in their 50s. They both work building rocket boosters. As they drive, they notice oncoming headlights. Reggie's car drifts into the oncoming lane yet again, clipping the side of the Saturn. The car carrying Jim and Keith fishtails out of control and is hit by Kaiserman's truck. Kaiserman climbs out of his truck and calls 911. Both Jim and Keith die at the scene.

Utah State Trooper Bart Rindlisbacher responds to the accident. He evaluates the scene and interviews Reggie, who states that he pulled left and clipped a car. Reggie's mom is there. Trooper Rindlisbacher drives Reggie to the hospital, asking questions along the way. Reggie reiterates that he hydroplaned, but the officer observes Reggie texting in the back of the car.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Reggie is a religious individual whose faith plays a major role in his life, but he has a problem with the truth. Does embarrassing one's family play a role in such behavior?
2. Would you have called the police if you had observed erratic driving?
3. Did Reggie lie about hydroplaning?
4. How do you believe the presence of one's parents at an accident scene affects information given?

Chapter 2

Keith's wife, Leila, never worried about her husband. He was a model husband. Technology was at the core of his life. The police inform her and Jackie, Jim Furfaro's wife, about their deaths.

During his interview of Reggie, Trooper Rindlisbacher has trouble making sense of the events. He breaches the issue of cell phone use with Reggie, but at this time, there are no laws about the use of cell phones while driving. Alcohol played a role in the 17,590 of the 43,500 driving deaths that occurred the previous year. Teens have caused a disproportionate number of crashes. National agencies have not been tracking accidents caused by cell phones, even though researchers at Harvard have been projecting cell phones as a growing distractor that would contribute to roadway fatalities. 2006 is a major year in the progress of hand held technology. 80 million smart phones are in circulation. These devices are not simply phones; you can text, email, play games, view videos and surf the Internet. In 2006, cell phone users are sending 12.5 billion texts per month. Trooper Rindlisbacher feels that Reggie may be "rubbing off the blame," trying to justify his role in the accident. The family contacts Reggie's brother, Phil, a lawyer, who recommends that he stop volunteering information. The trooper could have written a ticket, which would have ended the matter. But Rindlisbacher feels Reggie is not being square with him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you process bad news?
2. Why do you believe teens play such a major role in roadway accidents?

3. What percentage of auto accidents are now caused by technology vs. alcohol?
4. How many texts do you send each day?
5. How often do you use your smart phone per day?
6. Would you continue to investigate something that does not seem right?

Chapter 3

Adam Gazzaley is a neurologist and neuroscientist who runs the neuroimaging lab at the University of California at San Francisco. He uses complex technology, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG), and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). These studies have led to a growing understanding of brain function. Dr. Gazzaley is one of the world's foremost experts in the science of attention. At the core of attention studies is the importance of focus and its counterpoint, ignoring.

Gray matter is the most evolved part of the brain. It makes us human and controls abstraction, language, how we make decisions, organize our time, and, of course, focus. Attention gives us the ability to attend to a threat or perceive an opportunity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you use attention in your daily life?
2. What is the importance of attention?

Chapter 4

In this chapter we learn that Reggie comes from a family of six. His parents, Mary Jane and Ed, have been married since she was eighteen and he was nineteen. Reggie grew up in a close knit Mormon community and is considered an all-American boy. He is hard working and respected by his coach, Van Park.

After the accident, Ed worries that Reggie will be arrested and sent to jail. He remembers a story of a young man killed in jail.

Jackie Furfaro informs her daughters, Stephanie and Cassidy, that their father has been killed in an accident. Jackie wonders, "How am I going to do this alone?" We are introduced to Terry Warner, a victim's advocate in Cache County, and a friend of the Furfaro family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you deal with a family crisis?
2. How would your parents deal with you being involved in a fatal accident?

Chapter 5

We learn of Terry's troubled childhood. Her father was a substance abuser of pills and alcohol, prone to volatility and violent behavior—he even threatened to kill his wife when intoxicated. Terry's mother was a Mormon who tried to keep up appearances. Terry has an older brother, Michael, who began to use pot and sniff gasoline, and a baby brother, Matthew. To deal with her troubled family, Terry became a voracious reader.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do abusive households affect children?
2. If you had a similar family life, how would you respond?
3. Substance abuse is at the core of many family problems. How would you react to such a dynamic in your family?

Chapter 6

Officer Rindlisbacher reviews the events of the day, evaluating the things he cannot get out of his head. Leila is involved in arranging Keith's funeral so that it will follow Jim's, allowing friends and colleagues to attend both. It affects their daughter Megan deeply.

Jackie is also involved in arranging Jim's funeral and supporting her two young daughters. They sleep together under Jim's robe, comforted by the smell of their husband and father. Jackie views her husband's broken body and says her last goodbyes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do individuals deal with mourning and loss?
2. How do traumatic events change human interactions?

Chapter 7

Dr. Gazzaley has a great drive and passion for his work. The "cocktail party problem" is among the most fundamental precepts in attention science. When you are surrounded by conversations at a cocktail party, focus and attention interplay, shifting from individual to individual, showing the limitations of attention. You cannot pay attention to two conversations at once.

In the middle of the 19th century, Herman Von Helmholtz began to study reaction time. Using a galvanometer and electric stimulation, he estimated a "neural conduction time" of around one hundred meters per second. Researchers realized with the advent of the machine age that machines were moving faster than humans could react to them. Data began to move faster with the invention of the telegraph by Samuel Morse. Frances Cornelius Donders evaluated our ability to engage in ever-complex tasks and the time required for simple mental processing. He wrote, "Distraction during the appearance of stimulus is always punished with prolongation of the process." Also arising at this time were the first tabulation devices, early forms of computers and interpersonal communication devices such as the radio. This increased complexity brought much utility but also set the stage for a challenge to the human brain. In other words, technology was evolving by the day, but the human brain was more or less staying put.

There are ever-increasing opportunities for individuals to create and broadcast media, and in our current world, we must interact with that ever-growing media. In a typical work day, we are interrupted by various media stimulation more and more. Even in the sharing of scientific information, we are becoming oversaturated with information. Magicians illustrate the power of distraction by shifting focus. Dr. Gazzaley says, "Distraction is a powerful weapon."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain the "cocktail party affect."
2. How do we deal with complex tasks?
3. Discuss how computers and communication have merged in your everyday life.
4. What is the core skill of magicians?
5. How can the constant shower of emails and tweets affect your ability to focus on tasks?

Chapter 8

The effects of Terry's childhood are discussed. Her stepfather, Danny would get drunk and play the sax in the middle of the night, abusing her and the family. He would threaten to kidnap Michael. Terry used reading and books to escape her abusive home life. During her senior year, her mom filed for divorce, and Terry finally discovered Danny was not her biological father. Despite her high school guidance counselor's advice, Terry went on to community college with the support of the Mandels, her employers at an accounting company. She later continued her education at University of Southern California. But even in college, Danny haunted her life, showing up when she and Michael were at the movies and taking Michael. Michael views the event differently, underscoring some differences in how children view their parents and home strife. Terry's mother Kathie reconnected with Terry's birth father during her senior year. Terry wanted nothing to do with him and decided that she didn't want a family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does substance abuse affect families and especially children?
2. Terry is mentored by her employer and her professor at community college. Do you have any non-family mentors who have guided you through crises?
3. Would you wish to make contact with a birth parent if they made overtures?
4. How will you decide on future family life based on events in childhood?

Chapter 9

Trooper Rindlisbacher plans follow-up interviews with Kaiserman. He also learns that Reggie's mom wishes to have a lawyer present for any interview of Reggie. She feels "scared to death." Reggie has many restless nights and is not acting like himself.

We learn of Dallas Miller, Reggie's best friend and a positive influence. We also learn of the deep rivalry between Reggie and his older brother Nick. They grew up being highly competitive at sports video games. The typical person in the eight to eighteen year age group spends about 7.5 hours using "entertainment media," with a good chunk of time spent multitasking, going from technology to technology. More and more children have personal devices such as iPods and cell phones. A 2007 study by Nationwide finds 73 percent of drivers talk on the phone, with teen drivers showing the highest use of any demographic as Reggie comes of age. Teen media use has soared, and so has multitasking.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Do you see hiring a lawyer as an admission that you have something to hide?
2. How many hours do you spend using technology on an average day?
3. Do you use your cell phone while driving? And why?

Chapter 10

Reggie leaves the house for the first time after three days. He is terrified by each passing car. He goes to see Gaylyn White, the counselor. They review the events of that day. Reggie cannot remember, but believes he must have done something wrong. The counselor gives Reggie some tasks: exercise, write in a journal, and meditate. She tells him to start writing letters to the families of Keith and Jim. He begins to write the letters; they read "I'm sorry" over and over again.

Ten days later, the counselor states that Reggie is doing better, but she is still concerned. She knows of his return from the Mission and wonders if he was lying to deal with another disappointment.

We learn that Reggie had pre-marital sex over Christmas break and lied to the Bishop about it. He also lied to his girlfriend Cammi

about his discussion with the Bishop. Reggie meets with his lawyer, Jon Bunderson; he feels he can trust the lawyer. Reggie tells the lawyer that he believes the wet roads caused the accident.

A few weeks after that meeting, two young people are killed in an accident involving cell phone use.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe you would benefit from counseling in the event of a major life event?
2. Would you lie to prevent further disappointment to your family?
3. Would you lie to alleviate stress?

Chapter 11

How can war pilots navigate when they are focused on gauges, listening to radios, evading anti-aircraft fire, and dog fighting? World War II was a pivotal time in the relationship between man and machine. This led to the next wave in the study of attention. Dr. Gazzaley explains how Dr. Anne Treisman was crucial in helping us understand “bottom-up attention.” We also learn how other researchers investigate the science of attention. In her early experiments, Dr. Treisman worked with subjects listening and repeating passages with an earphone in just one ear. While participants were able to block out a lot of peripheral distractions, the experiment demonstrated that our attention filters are not a total block. She also discovered that we may be paying attention to stimuli somewhere in the recesses of our brain. Dr. Treisman’s work verified the limits of the attention filter. There is a tension going on inside the brain. It is a tug-of-war between two different aspects of the attention system: one called “bottom-up attention” and the other called “top-down attention.”

Top-down attention is what we use to direct our focus, stay on a work project, set our objectives and attend to them. Bottom-up attention is different. It allows our attention to be captured instantly, without our control, say, by the sound of our name, or a bird flying by, or the ring of the phone. Bottom-up attention operates unconsciously, automatically, driven by sensory stimulus and contextual cues. Top-down and bottom-up attention are both essential to survival and thus balance each other.

At his home, Dr. Gazzaley treats his guests to magic tricks that illustrate top-down attention and bottom-up attention. Modern devices are masterful at capturing attention. Our personal communication devices are unprecedented at capturing both our top-down and bottom-up attention systems.

Technology companies are trying to occupy more of our brain per unit time. It’s as close to a business model as you can imagine. The more engaged you are in what they create, the more successful they are. Another scientist, Dr. David Strayer, is investigating how technology impacts the ability of drivers to focus when they’re behind the wheel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give an example of top-down attention.
2. Give an example of bottom-up attention.
3. How do the chimes on your device affect your attention?

Chapter 12

Reggie gets a job at a car dealership arranged by his childhood baseball coach. Keith’s widow returns to work as a bookkeeper. While working to protect her rights with the insurance company, she discovers that Reggie’s family has retained an attorney. Leila visits the scene of the accident; it upsets her deeply. She becomes ill several days later and requires emergency room treatment.

Jackie, Jim’s widow, gets back online to play their favorite game, *World of Warcraft*. She makes contact with Gary Maloney, an old friend of Jim and hers. He lets her know that she is not alone. She cannot bring herself to drive past the scene of the accident. She,

too, learns that Reggie has hired a lawyer and that Reggie suggested that Jim crossed the yellow line. She asks herself why Reggie couldn't just call and say he is sorry.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you deal with visiting a place of tragic loss?
2. If you were involved in an accident would you call and say you are sorry? Why or why not?

Chapter 13

Trooper Rindlisbacher is convinced that the accident was caused by texting. Reggie's lawyer asks about texting, and Reggie's mother investigates it by reviewing their phone bill.

Trooper Rindlisbacher meets with the Cache County Attorney's Office. He discusses the case with Tony C. Baird. Baird had not been aware of texting and driving in a legal context as a major problem. He agrees to move forward on a subpoena for the phone records.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you ever become fixed on a task or an idea?
2. What is a subpoena?
3. Did you know that your texts are on your phone record?
4. Take a look at your phone bill—does the amount of texting surprise you?

Chapter 14

Dr. Posner is a leader in the field of attention science. Via electrical signals in the brain, he studies the time it takes the brain to reallocate resources when attention shifts. Usual responses are about one hundred milliseconds. Imaging from PET scans, MRIs, fMRIs and EEGs allows us to examine finer slices of the neurological networks. The network includes parts of the brain like the anterior cingulate cortex, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, and the prefrontal cortex. Through this technology, it is now possible to view attention much more concretely as an organ system with its own functional anatomy.

We have broken attention down to its component parts. [Work at MIT](#) has identified a powerful, multifunctional type of neuron in the prefrontal cortex: the executive control neuron. These neurons bring together information from disparate parts of the brain and organize it, helping set direction, goals, and focus.

[Work at Princeton](#) has shown that resources in the brain shift from attending “less relevant” information to attending the “more relevant” information. Does this mean that when a person is paying attention to one thing, they automatically ignore other things? Or is there a mechanism for allowing the person to modulate or control how much attention they pay to the other source of stimulation? These questions are very important; focusing on one source (a person, a device, the road ahead, etc.) comes at the cost of awareness of everything else.

Dr. Gazzaley believes that maybe the brain can be trained in its ability to focus and multitask. Working with video games, he may have developed a way to train individuals to juggle two tasks and improve focus in the long run.

GTE's Dr. Strayer studies how to configure networks and displays so that information that is useful and life preserving is prioritized, especially in high tech aviation. He has expanded his work over the years, which has led him to believe that car cell phone use is dangerous. His supervisor was uninterested in his work at first, and so were the wireless companies, who were designing technology to keep people talking. So, he transferred to the University of Utah to pursue his work. He discovered that when people talk on the phone, they make twice the number of errors as when they just listened to the radio. But mobile devices are not

only used for speaking anymore. Dr. Gazzaley and Dr. Strayer meet at a conference at Stanford, hosted by Dr. Nass, whose brother was killed by a drunk driver. The topic of the meeting is multitasking.

Dr. Strayer believes that his work on distracted driving will lead people to stop it if they realize how dangerous it can be.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the technology used to measure brain function?
2. Where are control neurons located?
3. Can you focus on more than one thing at a time? Give an example.
4. Why did phone companies market heavily to drivers?
5. Why is talking more disruptive than listening to the radio?
6. Why do you believe technology is addictive?

Chapter 15

Terryl graduated from USC. She started working at a legal agency to care for a friend named April who had leukemia. April talked her to into going on an LDS Mission.

Terryl started working in the victims advocate program in Orange County. She worked with a woman who wanted to divorce an abusive husband who happened to be an LDS Bishop.

Terryl married Alan Warner, and they moved back to Utah, where she found a job as a victims advocate with Cache County, impressing the county attorney, Scott Wyatt, along the way. She made great progress in educating the community on family abuse.

She met Jackie Furfaro at their daughters' gymnastics center and they talked about Jackie's loss. Terryl became involved in the case.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you be affected by the severe illness of a close friend or relative?
2. Why do we change our social relationships?
3. What role did her own abuse play in Terryl becoming a victim's advocate?

Chapter 16

Dr. Atchley, a psychologist with Kansas University, works on intelligent design. He studies why we are drawn to our devices and what makes us check them all the time, whether at the dinner table or behind the wheel of a car. Why are these devices so attractive that, despite our best intentions, we cannot help ourselves?

The internet was a product of a research program initiated in 1973 by a branch of the military called the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The aim was to create a communication system that would go across multiple networks, making it less vulnerable to attack or instability. Silicon Valley became the engine for its growth. Dr. Atchley grew up there and was fascinated by computers. His first computer was TI-99 by Texas Instruments. It gave him the ability to do anything he wanted with it—program his own games, store information. Technology was improving quickly; we were expanding beyond ourselves, pushing back frontiers, bettering ourselves. From his room, Dr. Atchley could reach across the globe.

Moore's law is a key technology maxim; it essentially says computing power doubles every eighteen months to two years. Metcalfe's law defines the value of a telecommunications network: the more people, the more valuable the network. Computer power has greatly increased since World War II, when a machine could perform around 350 multiplications or 5,000 simple additions each second. The iPhone 4 can do two billion instructions per second.

At a conference, Dr. Atchley sits listening to the lecturer, his computer closed while all around him individuals are checking their computers. He uses a quotation from the Bible, “Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.” He believes that if he opens his laptop, he’ll start checking things, get distracted from the lecture, and his own analysis of it. He does not trust himself to be disciplined, and he states that his research at the University of Kansas supports this—students have many problems dealing with a periodic “media fast.” The need to stay in touch with friends, family, and business connection is simply irresistible. “It’s a brain hijacking machine,” he says of computers. This is the core of his research.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the internet developed?
2. What is Moore’s law?
3. What is Metcalf’s law?
4. How would you react to a technology or media fast?
5. Do you ever open your computer or device during a lecture, and why?

Chapter 17

Jackie has to drive her daughters Stephanie and Cassidy to her mother’s house, which means driving on Valley Drive, where her husband died. Stephanie, the oldest, has begun to play World of Warcraft on her dad’s computer. They also have movie nights; media seems to help the family escape the tragedy.

Megan walks down the aisle by herself at her wedding, not wanting anyone to replace her dad. The marriage doesn’t work; she spends hours gaming, sometimes all day.

Terryl and her family go to Mexico over Christmas to visit and help an orphanage. They stay in a condo owned by their friend Neal. Neal made his money in technology.

Terryl and her husband renovate a house in Logan. She reconnects with her biological father. During her childhood he had tried to make contact, but she was never allowed to answer the phone. Learning this, in many ways, solves one of the mysteries of her childhood.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you use technology to escape the hardships of life?
2. How important is gaming in your life?

Chapter 18

Trooper Rindlisbacher gets the okay to go after Reggie’s cell phone records. In the application for the records it says that Trooper Rindlisbacher asked Reggie whether he was texting, which Reggie denies. Shaw cannot give a reasonable explanation for his driving pattern. Through the subpoena, Verizon Wireless was ordered to provide to the trooper all records associated with Reggie’s number.

Leila and her lawyer Herm Olsen discuss the road conditions and the lack of a shoulder on the road. She hopes the road will be fixed. The lawyer tells Leila that the police should have talked to her. They had not. She contacts the trooper, who volunteers how he watched Reggie texting on the way to the hospital and how he is investigating the cell phone use.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. How would you deal with learning about texting affecting a family or friend's life?

Chapter 19

Reggie begins to work as an assistant coach for the Bear River Bears, his former high school team. The coach Greg Madson believes Reggie is consumed by the accident and needs an escape. He believes coaching will be good therapy. Reggie also starts dating Tasha Haber, who knows about the accident and is supportive.

After many attempts, the trooper finally gets the records from Reggie's number. He needs help analyzing the information. He begins working with Scott Singleton, a local agent of the Utah State Bureau of Investigation. Singleton likes working on complex cases, but has never had a cell phone or texted. He begins reviewing the records. After several weeks analyzing the data, he realizes that there is a pattern of texts prior to the accident. Reggie was texting when the accident happened.

He tests a theory looking down at a piece of paper and driving the route of the accident. He is astonished that someone can text and drive. Reggie had been texting the entire way. In March 2007 in Salt Lake City, a seventeen year old is killed by a nineteen year old who had been on the phone prior to the accident. The girl's mother stated, "I never thought to warn her about the phone."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever asked for help on a complex problem?
2. Have you ever tried to text or use the phone while driving? Did you find it hard?
3. Do you know of anyone in your community that has been injured because of cell phone use?

Chapter 20

At the University of Kansas, a student is working with a driving simulator, which tells scientists about the student's relationship with technology. She is driving and keeping an ear out for texts, an activity she sometimes does in her driving. She got her first phone at sixteen. It's hard to ignore even when studying—it's the key to her social life. The questions to be answered are: a) What is the value of social connection? b) How does it impact the lure of the phone? c) When it comes to social connections, what is the value of immediate gratification?

Dr. Atchley continues to explore these questions. He theorizes that if technology is like an addictive substance, the users would find the information delivered on a device as irresistible as alcoholics find alcohol. He works on an experiment comparing the value of money to the value of a text. Students are told they have received a text from a significant other. They are promised \$5 if they respond immediately or \$100 if they wait an hour to respond. This is called "neuroeconomics." The value of a text falls faster than the value of money.

They also discover that there is a sense of urgency when a text comes from a significant other. The basic findings read, "The current data shows the need to engage in a behavior that only has a value in the short term."

The findings show that technology creates more of a compulsion than an addiction. Working with a driving simulator sending both driving directions and social information, the student participant remembers the social information better than driving information.

Getting information of value seems to explain the lure of technology. It works via both attention systems: top-down and bottom-up. The buzz of incoming data is the bottom-up system at work. There are neurochemical releases when we disclose personal information. The reward areas of the brain light up when people share, and some people also appear to be more susceptible than others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever used a driving simulator?
2. Do you feel compelled to respond to a friend's text immediately?
3. Is social information more valuable than other information?
4. Do any of your friends or family seem more susceptible than others to distraction?

Chapter 21

Terryl's daughter Jayne, a sixth grader, does a project on Mary Suratt, who owned the boarding house where John Wilkes Booth stayed. She excels in school and wishes to become a doctor. Terryl is a devoted parent with outgoing, adjusted kids. After doing research on the powerful impact of TV on family relationships, Terryl decides to remove television from her home. Television plays to our attention system in extraordinary ways, using light, sound and story, which explains why it's still the most dominant form of media.

Television greatly affects family dynamics; it can also retard language development. [A 2004 Pediatrics study](#) concluded that very early exposure to television is associated with negative developmental outcomes. Watching fast-paced shows as a child made children less able to follow directions and demonstrate patience. These are "executive function" tasks, meaning they engage the prefrontal cortex—that all-important part of the brain involved in focus. Television also creates a sedentary lifestyle.

Television is powerful because it effectively plays the top-down and bottom-up systems against each other. Your personal devices now bring you a story of your own. Your top-down system is heavily invested, and it gets reinforced by the bottom-up alerting you to what is happening in your life, just like plot updates. Thus our modern devices command our attention like nothing before.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you participate in outdoor activities?
2. Do you believe that television watching affected your life growing up?
3. What part of your brain is affected by television?
4. Using a favorite program, chart out the top-down and bottom-up aspects that capture your attention.
5. How is your personal device like a television?

Chapter 22

After the accident, Reggie focuses on a passage from the *Book of Mormon*: "Therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead." He and his family continue to work to get him to go on the mission.

Over the course of several months, Scott Singleton works to track down whom Reggie had been texting on the morning of the accident. He wants to know what Reggie had been texting about; what had distracted him; and if there was a much clearer, if tragic, reason that two men had been killed. There are lots of legal and bureaucratic roadblocks, however. He and Tony Baird, the deputy county attorney, work to get a subpoena on the number Reggie had been texting. A number of weeks (and several phone companies) later, they get their answer: nineteen-year-old Briana Bishop.

Singleton and Agent Olsen meet with Briana and her father. They ask about her relationship with Reggie and the role texting plays in their communications. They then ask about texting on the morning of the accident.

Could the accident have taken place because Reggie had been reading her text, Agent Olsen asks. The logs from the phone company show a pattern of multiple texts. Singleton had records of eleven texts between Reggie and Briana prior to the crash and thirteen texts afterward. Briana claims she does not recall the content of the texts.

Reggie is informed that he will get to go on a mission. He weeps in relief and joy. But agents Singleton and Olsen decide to interview Briana at work. She continues to claim unclear memory of the texts. Singleton asks Briana if Reggie coached her for the interview. She denies it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you know the depth of the detail of your texting record?
2. Now that you know a record is easily discovered, will it affect your texting?
3. Would you lie to protect a friend or family member involved in an accident?

Chapter 23

In May of 2007, Governor Christine Gregoire of Washington signs the first state law banning texting while driving. It will carry a one hundred dollar fine. Other states grapple with whether to regulate cell phone use by drivers.

Year after year, lobbyists from the major cell companies fight against the laws, arguing, among other things, that mobile phones posed no different a distraction than other tasks, like eating, even though data shows that cell phone use was the number one distraction leading to car accidents in California.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the law in your state regarding cell phone use and texting? What is the fine?
2. Why did cell companies lobby against these laws?

Chapter 24

David Greenfield, an internet addiction expert, received drug addiction therapy during high school. Thus, he has a particularly intimate knowledge of addiction. He turned himself around, became a psychologist, and currently serves as director of the Center of Internet and Technology Addiction at the University of Connecticut. He argues that what is happening today with technology is what happened in the seventies with drugs.

Much debate continues over the concept that technology is addictive. In short, most researchers don't put texting or video game playing or Internet use in the same category as addictive drugs. They might be compelling, say many researchers, but not addictive. To Dr. Greenfield, it's semantics. "Whether the word is 'impulse,' or 'compulsion' or 'addiction,' clearly there is an overtaking of rational, logical processing of information and judgment like we see with other drugs," he says.

In 1998 in London, scientists observed the brains of eight subjects playing a video game. The players were injected with a drug and had special scans called PET's. The results showed that levels of dopamine, a neurochemical, at least doubled during game play.

Dopamine centers are critical. They are our reward centers. They light up for all pleasures. They light up with cocaine and alcohol ingestion. Different substances affect dopamine differently. Some addictive drugs, like cocaine, prevent dopamine from being absorbed. Other drugs, like amphetamines, induce a release of dopamine. To Dr. Greenfield, technology may act like amphetamines. As you open an email, there is a tiny reward. After a while, the mere presence of the device begins to offer a promise of tiny hits—called "the anticipatory link."

In China, five men seeking treatment for internet addiction were studied. The researchers discovered a reduction in the dopamine transporter. This and other work has found that Internet addicts also tend to have personality traits or psychological conditions consistent with substance abuse and "pathological gambling." What is implied is that some individuals are more susceptible to internet addiction, just as some individuals are more susceptible to pathological gambling or substance abuse.

Dr. Greenfield states that we keep checking texts to see if one is important, and thus rewarding. Since our inboxes are constantly

filling with spam, we never know which is good; this is called Classic Variable Reinforcement.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the neurochemical that may play a role in addiction?
2. Do you believe individuals are addicted to the internet or video games?
3. What is the “anticipatory link”?
4. Do you constantly scan your phone and why?

Chapter 25

In mid-June 2007, Reggie is at the missionary training center. He has been named a leader and is feeling good. But a week into it, his lawyer calls. The call makes him nervous, but it is only a request to sign some papers.

As Singleton begins to amass evidence, Baird sees that a potential case is developing. He has to develop a case along the lines of “criminal negligence,” similar to one involving an individual who drove with failing brakes and killed someone.

But texting while driving is a new legal area. At this point, there is no other case law, and nothing statutory that gives any real guidance as to whether this constituted negligent homicide or something else. There are also no statistics as to how many accidents were caused by cell phone using drivers. It is all so new. Could Reggie have known it was dangerous to text and drive?

Reggie begins his mission in Canada.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that Reggie still harbors a fear of the consequences of the accident?
2. What is case law?
3. Look up the current statistics on distracted driving and discuss the growth per year.

Chapter 26

Jackie and Leila continue to be in contact with the investigators, but frustration grows. After returning from a family trip to Washington, D.C., Jackie calls Terryl into her office. Terryl hears about the accident and begins to investigate in earnest. She notes that the Reggie is uncooperative, and was texting while driving.

Terryl generates a memo that the victims’ families are asking that negligent homicide charges be filed. She voices indignation over the fact that Reggie’s family has hired an attorney and that Reggie is off on his mission. She cites that Reggie lied to police about texting. She ends with a bold statement. “Reggie,” she wrote, “has gone on with his life and has not shown any remorse for the extensive damage he has done.”

Jackie and Leila meet in Terryl’s office with the prosecutors. Leila says she wants Reggie punished. A legal intern investigates the possible charges. The list includes reckless driving, reckless endangerment, negligent homicide—all misdemeanors—and felony manslaughter. He believes the charge should be manslaughter, but unless Reggie admits he knew about the risks of texting while driving, it would be difficult to convict. So, he settles on the toughest misdemeanor penalty—negligent homicide.

A few days earlier, five high school cheerleaders in the Rochester area die in a head-on crash with a truck. Texting is suspected.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you feel about delays in punishment?
2. Does the addition of a victim's advocate in such cases bring a voice to the victims?
3. Define these terms: reckless driving, reckless endangerment, negligent homicide, and manslaughter.
4. What charge do you believe someone would face today with the data on texting?

Chapter 27

What does the powerful lure of personal communications technology add up to? Researchers answer by way of an analogy. In the 21st century, technology can be compared to food. You need food to live. And while you may not require technology to survive in the same way as food, our culture and social lives require it. In the same way we crave food, we crave connection. Not just for its own sake, but because connection is essential to survive. When your device pings, it is a proverbial tap on the shoulder. You want to find out who it is. You need to. Your bottom-up survival system demands it.

Dr. Lieberman, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard University, states, "We use stone-age brains with space-age technology, and that can lead to trouble." He says our tech devices let us be "hyper social," which has many benefits, but also costs. "We're using them with brains not geared for this sort of thing."

Researchers worry that heavy use of interactive media can, over time, reduce attention spans. The fear is that we grow so accustomed to frequent bursts of stimulation that we have trouble feeling satisfied in their absence. Each time your device pings, you get a hit of dopamine. It's a pleasurable feeling, a release from the reward center. If there is no incoming text—no stimulation—you start to feel bored. You crave another hit.

Dr. Greenfield describes "Generation D," young people who were raised on digital devices. The concern isn't limited to young people, but many researchers say they are more vulnerable because their frontal lobes are still developing. We may be overloading the brain. There are fewer resources left to make a good decision. For instance, deciding whether or not to focus on the road or the phone when you're driving. If your brain is taxed, you may not even be able to make a clear-headed decision about what is the right thing to do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe technology overtaxes the brain?
2. Are you finding yourself going from application to application on your device?
3. Do texts on your phone prevent you from focusing on the road or work?

Chapter 28

Baird believes that Reggie is a decent young man. But he also believes Reggie lied. Baird remembers that while he was on a motorcycle at 16, he hit a boy while waving at the postman. He understands what it is like to be a young person involved in an accident.

Terryl does not agree with Baird. The decision falls on Linton, the county attorney. Mr. Paines has a daughter who texts, so he rationalizes how an accident would change her life. He reviews Dr. Strayer's work on how using a phone is as risky as driving drunk. His work shows that cell phone use impaired drivers to the same level as .08 blood alcohol content, the level of legal intoxication.

Linton comes from a Mormon background, but had been abused at age seven. He felt God had deserted him. The experience makes him distrustful of religious institutions.

Linton decides what the charge against Reggie will be. He knows this will be a test case, a way to set a precedent.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do life experiences shape adult decisions?
2. What is a test case?

Chapter 29

Reggie is a month into his mission when he is informed that he must go home because the state has filed charges against him. The charge is negligent homicide, a Class A misdemeanor. He calls his dad, who informs him that they pulled his phone records. They know he was texting when the accident happened.

Back home from his mission for a second time, Reggie cannot eat. He starts seeing a counselor. With testing, it is apparent he has severe anxiety. The counselor believes he needs medication, but Reggie does not take it.

He meets with his lawyer, Bunderson. Bunderson knows the family wishes to fight the charges much more than Reggie.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you react to being called back from a major life event?
2. How would you deal with such stress? Would you take medication?
3. Do previous events come back to haunt us? Do you have an example?

Chapter 30

Leila O'Dell goes to the hearing for Reggie. Linton gets his first look at Reggie in person. He looks like an all-American kid. Megan O'Dell glares at Reggie and thinks, "You killed my dad, I hate you." The judge keeps two books on his desk: the *Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous* and Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

Reggie's lawyer enters a plea of not guilty and requests a preliminary hearing. Linton is prepared for a trial. He has a study in which 64 percent of adults in a major survey said they had sent a text while driving even though 89 percent believe it is wrong.

Bunderson starts to develop a defense. Is it common knowledge that this was grossly negligent conduct? He also looks into the phone records. The phone records clearly show texting activity, but they don't prove that Reggie had been texting at the exact moment of the accident. He also looks into possible investigative misconduct. Had Rindlisbacher mishandled his initial interview with Reggie? He delays the trial with motions.

Mary Shaw, Reggie's mom, remains a fierce protector of her son. Singleton and Rindlisbacher interview her. She gets testy when the trooper asks her if she told Reggie not to cooperate. They debate whether Reggie was texting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How, as a parent, would you defend your child in an interview such as this?
2. Do you believe that his parents reinforced Reggie's denials of texting?
3. What are Miranda rights?

Chapter 31

The legislature of the state of Utah begins to look at distracted driving in 2008. Representative Stephen Clark almost gets into an accident while texting. He is mortified by his behavior. He decides that this must stop, not only with himself, but with everyone driving on the roads.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has any near-tragedy affected your opinions?
2. Do you believe some government leaders change their opinions based a personal event?

Chapter 32

Bunderson prepares for the defense. He wishes to prohibit the prosecution from introducing diagrams of the crash site and other evidence. He attacks the reliability of eyewitness Mr. Kaiserman. He also wishes to block information on Reggie's missions.

He attempts to throw out the testimony of David Strayer, the expert on distracted driving. Bunderson wrote, "The opinion of an expert that texting or using a cell phone is distracting or even dangerous is nothing other than telling the jury that such activity is either negligent or criminally negligent."

The prosecution answers that Dr. Strayer should be allowed to discuss the risks of texting. Linton states, "He is expected to testify that text messaging can cause a person to focus on things other than driving, and that at high speeds driving while texting is consistent with driving over the center lines, and in general, erratic driving." Bunderson doesn't yet know the neuroscience, but he understands the risk: if an activity is inherently distracting, then it can be seen as inherently negligent.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of Mr. Bunderson's motions?
2. How do you believe Dr. Strayer's testimony will affect the trial?

Chapter 33

Jackie reconnects with Gary Maloney, a longtime family friend who had been best man at her wedding. They develop an attraction. Jackie is dealing with how to provide for her family with her modest income. Leila is also concerned about the strain on her and Keith's once-comfortable savings.

Terryl does not understand Jackie's family's use of media. Media use was exploding among children up to an average of around ten hours a day of screen time. Jackie defends her family's use of media. This is consistent with the majority of American parents. [In one study conducted by Northwestern University](#), 59% of parents did not worry that their kids would get addicted to technology. This may be because the parents themselves use media.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How much time did you spend on media as a child?
2. Is there a concern over technology use at your house?

Chapter 34

Reggie tries to balance the legal drama, his home life and his jobs detailing cars and coaching. He starts getting angry with his mother. He decides to move out. He attends community college and works part-time. Linton and Reggie's lawyer argue over who will pay for Reggie to hire an expert witness. In the end, the state and Reggie split the costs.

The lawyers go back and forth. Experts decide Reggie could not have hydroplaned. The judge rules that trooper Rindlisbacher can testify. Bunderson works on a possible plea with the state. Reggie finds that his new girlfriend has read a newspaper article about the trial.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you deal with a major stress: stay home or move out?
2. What is a plea deal?
3. How would you feel if you experienced the kind of public exposure Reggie did here?

Chapter 35

On December 11, 2008, this seminal case on texting and driving arrives at a hearing. The hearing examines how decades worth of attention science might apply to the law. Already worn down and terrified of the trial, Reggie is left transformed.

Dr. Strayer testifies on his work of many years on driving issues. The purpose of the proceeding is to determine if his testimony will be allowed at trial. His work shows a six-fold increase in crash risk when using a device. He says that when drivers text, they lose “just about all characteristics associated with safe driving.”

Mr. Bunderson argues about the relative risk. Dr. Strayer makes a powerful statement that affects Reggie: “What we’ve found to be even more important is—is your mind on the road? Something that takes your mind off the road, or hands off the wheel, creates a risk. But [the bigger risk comes from] . . . mind off the road than hands off the wheel.”

Reggie finds the testimony revelatory. He thinks, “I was so distracted by my phone device that I wasn’t aware of what was happening in the car, and have no memory of it.” Strayer continues to discuss how long it takes to refocus on the road—regain “situational awareness”—once a person stops texting. Reggie thinks, “What if I was so preoccupied that I actually didn’t know what was going on?” This is an important moment for Reggie. No matter how his lawyer attacks Strayer, Reggie can no longer deny it: he, his texting, killed Jim Furtaro and Keith O’Dell.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Texting and driving increases accident risk by how much?
2. Have you ever been lost in your texts?
3. Do you believe Dr. Strayer’s testimony helped Reggie come to terms with his actions?

Chapter 36

Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) was founded by Candy Lightner and quickly became the most powerful and effective public safety advocacy group in the country. Due in part to the group, the number of people killed by drunk drivers continues to fall.

A drunk driver remains impaired for the whole drive, whereas the impairment of a cell phone user is intermittent, and impacts the brain only in the period surrounding their interaction with the device.

A key point is that no one ever told people that drinking and driving was a wise idea, yet there has been a widespread perception in our culture that it's good to be digitally connected all the time.

Today, people use seat belts more than ever, and fewer people are driving drunk. This is due to enforcement of tough laws and heavy public education. In a survey by the AAA, drivers ranked drunk drivers as the most serious safety problem, and cell-phone using drivers as second.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you been affected by a drunk driver?
2. Do you have a chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers in your community?
3. Compare and contrast the effects of drinking and texting while driving.
4. Do you believe it is possible to multitask? Cite current research in your answer.

Chapter 37

Bunderson and Reggie discuss the plea. He can take a sentence that ranges up to ninety days in jail and includes community service. If there is a legislative hearing about texting, he will have to testify. The agreement is called a plea in abeyance, which will allow for his record to be wiped clean, should he meet all conditions. Reggie agrees to the plea.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the terms of the plea?
2. Do you believe Reggie was affected by just Dr. Strayer's words, or did his guilt kick in?

Chapter 38

Terryl calls Kaylene Yonk, a former parole officer who now has a private firm that prepares presentencing reports. Ms. Yonk interviews Reggie, who seems arrogant and displays no emotion whatsoever. She agrees with Terryl that Reggie should receive the harshest end of the plea. After seeing pictures of the accident at the second interview, though, Reggie breaks down, and her opinion changes.

This is the first time that Reggie lets the accident in. He had done all his crying alone. Despite feeling desperate to reach out, Reggie had been instructed by his lawyer that doing so could be an admission of guilt. He tells her he'd had no idea that texting and driving was wrong; no one had told him. She once had an experience with nodding off while driving. She connects with Reggie.

Terryl initially does not agree with Kaylene about the sentence until she remembers an accident in her past. Reggie agrees to a media interview as part of his plea.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you believe Reggie was so flat in his first interview with Kaylene?
2. Why is Terryl so fixated on a strict sentence?
3. Is there an event that has affected your behavior in a way similar to the so-called "Twinkie incident"?

Chapter 39

The Utah House of Representatives meets to discuss an anti-texting-while-driving law. Conservatives believe in limiting government intervention. Some believe that there are already laws about driving unsafely and that a separate law is unnecessary. An argument occurs.

They also listen to public comments. Some argue that the studies are ridiculous. The law stalls.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why would you fight a law on texting and driving?
2. What could be done to help pass the law?

Chapter 40

Members in the Standing Committee hear a few more comments about H.B.290, officially titled The Prohibition of Wireless Communication Device Use in a Motor Vehicle. Terryl stands up and begins to discuss several cases where texting caused deaths, including Reggie's case. Terryl tries to counter criticism that texting and driving is merely a theoretical problem—it is, in fact, fair to compare it to such problems as drinking and driving. Her office worked on only one DUI homicide in the past two and a half years, while they worked on four vehicular homicide cases involving device distraction.

Terryl notes many committee members are on their phones texting, playing, etc.

Reggie then gets up and tells his story. He apologizes to the families. He wants the legislature to pass the law. There is a hush in the chamber. Terryl's opinion of Reggie changes. She decides to work with him. The bill passes out of committee, and then passes the full house 55-20.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you have the courage to do what Reggie did?
2. What affected Terryl to change her mind?

Chapter 41

Judge Willmore explains that a plea agreement has been reached. Bunderson asks for another hearing in six months so Reggie's record can be cleared. He comments on Kaylene's report and discusses distractions.

Jackie is in the court. She does not know where Reggie stands. Reggie has been attempting to write an apology letter, but now he speaks to the families. He expresses great remorse and apologizes for his ignorance. He explains that remorse, to be real, must be "coupled with action." He says his new purpose in life is to make others aware of the dangers that took lives the day of the accident.

The judge asks if any victims or family members wish to speak. Mr. Kaiserman says, "Reggie, I hope in the future you may be able to get past this." Jackie speaks next, saying, "Please send a message to people everywhere that texting while driving is dangerous and the effects can be both heartbreaking and devastating."

The judge then discusses how the testimony of Reggie may have affected the passage of the law. He decreases his time in jail to thirty days. He quotes the section of *Les Misérables* where a bishop keeps Valjean out of prison to invest in good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you see the change in Reggie by his apology?
2. How would you have sentenced him?
3. Would you have forgiven Reggie if you were a family member of the deceased?
4. Explain the reference to *Les Misérables* and how it parallels Reggie's story.

Chapter 42

The Utah State Senate passes the law to ban texting and driving, 26-1. The legislation makes it a class C misdemeanor to use a device to send texts, a class B misdemeanor if said driver were to cause severe bodily injury and a second-degree felony if death results. Dr. Strayer credits Reggie.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the law?
2. Would you want stiffer laws governing texting?

Chapter 43

A crew videotapes Reggie's entrance to jail. The first night he has to sleep on the floor. He does not sleep for days. The judge is affected by the case and he stops using his phone while driving. Reggie has his sentence commuted after eighteen days.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the reduction of the sentence?
2. Would you react like the judge did?

Chapter 44

Three years after the accident, Reggie attends the first Distracted Driving Summit in Washington, hosted by the Secretary of Transportation. The conference draws scientists, public safety advocates and legislators. Reggie tells his compelling story to the attendees.

The *New York Times* publishes Matt Richtel's his "Driven to Distraction" series. It highlights the inability to do multiple tasks. When someone is doing two things at once, "there is an illusion of product utility."

At the end of the conference, the president signs an order forbidding federal employees from texting while driving during work hours.

Reggie writes an essay about *Les Misérables*, explaining the significance to him of the epic story and sends it to Judge Willmore. Reggie has dinner with Terry and Megan O'Dell. He makes a connection with Megan. He is invited to speak to NBA Rookies.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is Reggie impacting national policy?
2. Would you, in Megan's shoes, connect with Reggie and why?

3. Read "[Driven to Distraction](#)" by Matt Richtel and parallel it to this story.

Chapter 45

Reggie speaks to high school groups about his story. He relates that during the accident he was thinking about the text message. He shares his jail experience. He connects with the students. The NBA invites him back each year due to his powerful message.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you believe Reggie relates so well?
2. Why is his message so powerful?

Chapter 46

Dr. Strayer uses an MRI to look at attention in the brain. Reggie has agreed to be examined. Driving on the way to the University of Utah, chairs begin falling from a truck in front of his car. Reggie swerves and misses the chairs; he has complete focus on the road. He gets the MRI.

Dr. Gazzaley reviews Reggie's brain and looks at areas that are part of the attention network. Reggie's brain is deemed normal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you consent to be studied?
2. What areas in the brain control attention?

Chapter 47

Terry's family does well. Jayme does well at an international science essay competition. The next year, Taylor wins. Taylor eventually graduates as valedictorian. Her brother still believes his father is his hero.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you believe Terry's life experience has shaped her children?
2. Why does Michael have a different opinion of his father?

Chapter 48

Reggie, Linton and Terry all chase redemption. Religion plays a role in some of their lives, but not in others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your mechanism for dealing with life problems?
2. How do we make good decisions and maintain awareness in our lives?

Chapter 49

Dr. Strayer and Watson discuss “supertaskers.” They are rare. Their frontal lobe is different. “Their brains were less metabolically active.” These people are good at neural efficiency. People are working to understand how technology can be used to expand and improve attention. Technology is here to stay. We need to harness that power to our advantage.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Do you believe technology will improve attention and focus in the future?

Chapter 50

Reggie is dating a girl named Britney. He now has the courage to stop at the accident site. He is able to visit the gravesite of Keith O'Dell. Jackie has found a new partner. Reggie is able to connect with Terry and Jackie and her family. He makes a video for AT&T about the accident ([view here](#)).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has Reggie changed the lives of others?
2. Do you believe the victims have closure?

Study Questions to Think About

1. Will you change your pattern of device use based on the information in *A Deadly Wandering*?
2. Review the University of Rochester modified CAGE Tool and see if you have addictive tendency. Available [online here](#).
3. How well do you modulate your media use during school or work?
4. Can you see other daily activities that are affected by device distraction?
5. How do you feel when you see people fixed on their devices at school or work?
6. Would you use Google glass?
7. Is the technology industry able to address these addictive issues?

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Dr Peter J Papadakos is director of Critical Care Medicine and Professor of Anesthesiology, Surgery, Neurology and Neurosurgery at the University of Rochester. He is involved in the care of complex trauma patients and is well published in this field. His work includes the major textbook *Encyclopedia of Trauma Care*. Because of the rise of injuries noted secondary to distracted driving, he began observing the behavior of health professionals as they cared for patients.

His observations have led him to become an advocate for the education of health professionals in proper use of personal electronic devices in health care. He lectures and writes on this topic, widely targeting all health professions. Dr. Papadakos also helps these professionals to educate the public in the dangers of distracted behavior.

A Deadly Wandering: A Mystery, a Landmark Investigation, and the Astonishing Science of Attention in the Digital Age by Matt Richtel. Available in paperback, eBook, and digital audio editions.

You'll find more teaching guides [here](#).

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