

The Top Ten Things Every Newly Minted 21 Year Old Must Know About Drinking

In less than an hour, my niece---my sister's oldest child and affectionately known as "The Girl" ---will turn 21.

To say I'm filled with dread is an understatement.

It's not that I don't trust her judgment; it's everyone else I'm giving the side eye.

Then I'm sure watching "**Taken**" a few days ago didn't help my disposition.

I know she's good and kind. I know she's smart. As I stated, it's not her, it's all of the raving lunatics out there I'm worried about.

Somewhere my mother is laughing her ass off.

So it is with this in mind, I give the girl a gift that no one in their 40's ever gave me when I turned 21---How to drink.

1. NEVER, EVER GET INTO A CAR WITH SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN DRINKING, TAKING ANY ILLEGAL DRUGS OR HAS IMPAIRED JUDGEMENT.
2. Know who you're drinking with.
3. Watch your own drink. Always.
4. Know your limits. Stop drinking when your body says stop. Trust me.
5. Tip. 20% minimum. All of the time. Trust me.
6. If you're in a cab, text someone---anyone---the cab number
7. You come as a group; you leave as a group.
8. If you have an asshole friend that always starting drama with other people, cut 'em loose. Their actions could get you shot.
9. However much money you spend drinking, deposit an equal amount into your savings from your next paycheck.
10. If you have a bad feeling about a situation---whether it be in a club, the look of a crowd or someone you just met, it's probably pointing you in the right direction. Pay attention and proceed with caution.

Those are the basics.

Yes, I know that you know most of them already but I'm twice your age and I've just

figured out some of these a few years ago. I'm just trying to give you the benefit of my experience.

Have fun. Call me if you need to be picked up and remind me that we need to have a talk about which bars are off limits in the city.

Those are mine and I'm not sharing them with any more 21 year olds than I have to.