

# The Drive

- Becky Twaalfhoven

The winter vacations are difficult for a number of reasons. You have to go back to school and therefore have assignments to think about, and everyone is away or with family for several days. Most importantly, the weather is cold and usually dry, so it is difficult to go out when “out” isn’t an option. One surprising activity that has fallen out of fashion is going for a drive. Now that cars rule the roads, traffic and time constraints take the enjoyment out of driving for most people, who spend hours driving every week just to get to where they need to be on time. But what if they drove for the sake of it, with no time limit or destination? The drive would be fun. Driving can be an escape from the house, the town, and responsibility. Even if it’s only a 10-minute excursion, going somewhere new is refreshing, especially in Marblehead. There are countless commercials where cars are featured as part of an adventure, not just a mode of transportation. While it may seem hard to believe, it’s true: the destination is not the only important part of a journey. When you go on a drive, you can pause what’s going on in your life and look out at the rest of the world. Here are some tips for how to make the drive worth it:

1. Bring a friend. Share the moment with somebody who makes you happy. Keep a good conversation, or just sit in silence. Whatever mood you’re in, bring someone with you who appreciates it.
2. Play good music. Music improves mood, especially upbeat music, and singing can be an outlet for anything kept bottled up. Even if the feeling evoked is negative, in the end the release of any sort of emotion is important.
3. Find a scenic route. The downside of driving as an enjoyable activity is that it could potentially fail; any number of hazards would ultimately make the driver feel worse. The key to a successful drive is choosing an easy, relaxing route where the driver doesn’t have to make difficult decisions. For this reason, I recommend a trip in the early morning or at night, away from busy roads and residential areas (for example, Lynn Shore Drive and Nahant Road in Lynn).
4. Know your limits. If you’re driving, the route should be one you have driven or know how to drive, especially in terms of speed limit and road hazards. The music should be supplemental but not overwhelming, and any passengers should know when to step back and allow you to focus on the road. Although it can be a leisure activity, driving is still a responsibility, and should be treated as such.

Go drive. You choose where you go, how long you spend, and who you’re with. You choose silence or noise. Even if it’s only for a few minutes, it is an incredibly liberating experience to get up and just go.