

Judgement Doesn't Make You Fail-Proof – On Babies Left In Hot Cars

Posted by [Jill](#) on June 23, 2014 [32 Comments](#)

Every year, every. single. summer. my heart aches a deep, sharp, searing pain for the children who are lost to a tragic accident that takes way too many. Usually by mid-May, news outlets have reported at least a handful of babies/toddler/children left or trapped in hot cars. Dead. By the time summer is in full swing, it's too frequent to bear.

This year is no exception.

I know this tragedy strikes me in a particularly vulnerable place because I'm certain it could happen to me. It takes one lapse of judgement, one day of non-routine, one morning of chaos and exhaustion. I don't ever allow myself to think I'm above this. I don't ever allow myself to think "I'm too good of a parent to let that happen to my babies."

And that, I feel... I hope? Is my best defense against it. The way my stomach drops every time I even think of it, the way I live in fear of that one slip in memory on a warm day- I keep that emotion raw. I acknowledge it. I acknowledge that most of the parents who have been on the other side of this tragic mistake were just like me- loving, caring, *human*.

I take precautions. I keep my bag in the back of the car. I keep Lowell's Orbit infant seat rotated to the side when he's not in it. I make sure to always leave a door open to the car when there's a child in it, even if I'm just stepping away for a moment to unlock the front door to the house for the older kids to walk in before I retrieve the napping baby.

It never feels like enough, though. I know a large part of this intense fear stems from my anxiety, but I won't excuse myself for wanting to take all the extra steps I can. Except, what else *can I do*?

I've seen devices, like this [Childminder SoftClip System](#). I spoke with the company at a conference in May. I have to say, it looks like a great system since it doesn't require the caretaker to have a smartphone or turn anything on or off, but it's battery operated, and obviously not fail-proof.

Recently, I learned of the [Babeep](#), which is a random, audible reminder to check the back seat anytime you turn the car off. Seems like it could definitely be one extra step for parents who don't tune out things like beeps and other noises, and who aren't on their phone when they arrive at their destination. Again, not fail-proof.

That's the thing, right? That nothing is fail-proof. Nothing, not the warning systems or the reminders on our phones, and certainly not our brains, are fail-proof.

Every year around this time, as the reports trickle in, and the news feeds fill with opinions and shock, the comments that "that parent is a monster" and "I would NEVER forget my baby in the car," I'm compelled to share the link to the most profound piece of writing I've read since becoming a mother- [Fatal Distraction, by Gene Weingarten, published by the Washington Post](#).

I first shared it back in 2010, and what I said then still holds true, so I'll end with it.

THIS article, this heart destroying story of so many parent's grief and guilt, this tragic tale of loss and forgetfulness, is worth every single minute it will take you to read it from beginning to end. And do not skip from one point to the next. No, all these stories deserve to be heard and all these cautionary tales need to be told.

It is graphic, and it is so sad you will want to close your browser and be done with it all, to stick your fingers in your ears (or cover your eyes) and say "La, la, la.... not to me... never happen to me... puppies and rainbows and kittens!" But DON'T. It's so easy to sit here and say, "I would NEVER forget my baby in the car," but judgement doesn't make you immune to accidents and temporary lapses in memory.

<http://www.babyrabies.com/2014/06/judgement-doesnt-make-you-fail-proof-on-babies-left-in-hot-cars/#sthash.ZJdy8Cfj.dpuf>