

Tribute Speech Sample

I. Introduction

A. Attention Statement

"Life is the sum of your choices." That quote by Albert Camus, a Nobel Prize-winning novelist, is vividly brought to life in the story of one particular man I know.

B. Subject or Thesis Statement

I would like to share with you someone in my life who has influenced me greatly, my father, Fred Nameless.

C. Point Preview

My father is a self-sacrificing man, who is authentic in all of his dealings with others. However, in keeping with his authenticity, he tends to be impulsive.

D. Significance of Subject

It is because of his example, that I carefully consider the choices I make as a parent; knowing I can dramatically affect the lives of my children through my choices and characteristics.

II. Main Point One

A. Subject Statement

Fred's characteristic of sacrificing his time and energy for others was quite authentic - he was never trying to gain anything for himself.

B. Illustration (2 positives with one illustration only)

I look back now and remember a scene that played itself out many times when I was a teenager. I see a man in his thirties who just wants to relax at the end of his day of work and familial responsibility. One by one each of my three younger siblings go off to bed. As the 10:00 news wraps up, I know that if I want to talk to him, now is the time; I certainly wasn't going to get up at 4am to talk to him before he went to work. "Dad, can I talk to you about something?" Every time, he would give me his full attention, and I would begin to discuss whatever was on my mind that day. The topics ranged from expanding curfews

to school subjects, to grand philosophical questions. No matter what the topic or how late the conversation went, he sacrificed his time and his sleep, without ever making me feel like I was an inconvenience. He did not do this because he felt he should or to be a "good" parent, he did it because he wanted to. Our conversations were genuine, and he talked to me as a peer, as much as any person possibly can when talking to a teenager.

C. Summary Statement

So as we have seen, my father was self-sacrificing and authentic.

D. Transition Statement

However, often a positive trait manifests itself in a negative fashion; as was the case with my father.

III. Main Point Two

A. Subject Statement

His authenticity, being true to himself, often led him to impulsiveness.

B. Illustration (1 negative with one illustration only)

Some of the consequences for Fred's actions fizzled out after a short time and left us with many entertaining stories; but other consequences were huge and could not be undone. For example, he was working as a policeman in Gary, Indiana under Mayor Richard Hatch during the seventies. (Mayor Hatch was a notoriously corrupt. It wasn't until I took History 102 here at Palomar and learned that he had placed armed men at the polls to intimidate voters that I realized how corrupt he was.) One day, when my father saw the mayor come out of the city offices with his two bodyguards, he approached them and asked the bodyguards if they had permits for the weapons they were carrying. When they said they did not, he arrested them. The entertaining story that came from this is that for his "punishment", his superiors put him on traffic duty, where he immediately bought a clown nose and Clarabelle horn and danced around in the intersection directing traffic. The serious side of the story is that the political ramifications of this single choice led to my father being convicted on trumped up drug trafficking charges that sent him to prison for 3 years. Although he was later exonerated when the FBI did a full investigation into this and other matters regarding Mayor Hatch, the consequence to our family was huge.

C. Summary Statement

Today we have looked at someone who has influenced my life greatly through his characteristics and his choices, my father, Fred Nameless.

B. Post Point Review

We have seen that he was a very authentic person who could be self-sacrificing and yet tended to be impulsive.

C. Significance of Subject

The impact of living through the consequences of my father's decisions has taught me to consider more fully the consequences of my own actions - *before* I act.

D. Wraparound

To Mr. Camus' quote that our life is the sum of our choices, I would like to add that the choices of others are often included in the sum as well.