

# Death of a salesman argumentative essays

[Psychology](#), [Success](#)



## Introduction

Writers and playwrights try their best in bringing out different themes in their works of literature. Arthur Miller is one of America's most known playwrights whose literal works have major influence on the lives of most residents of the country. Arthur Miller's death of a salesman tries to depict how most people are hungry for success. This play gives a highlight on the American dream and how many people will strive to live the dream. Amongst the people trying to live the American dream, some of them will perish while trying to achieve the dream. This is elaborated in the play through the reference of the protagonist of the play Willy Loman. However, the play incorporates some minor characters that assist in bringing out the theme clearly and portraying the American dream from a positive perspective. The play highlights the different ways in which different people will view the American dream and how effective or ineffective some of them will be in achieving the American dream. The American Dream is dependent on the person pursuing it and the character of the person as well.

The American dream is success and the ability to live a comfortable life without any financial constraints. The American dream constitutes of happiness and fulfillment in the life of the characters and their families. Miller tends to show that a wrong interpretation of the American dream may result to failure and frustration in the life of an individual. The American dream tends to mold the behavior of some of the characters in the play. Some of the characters portray good moral behavior towards achieving the

American while some care less about ethics as far as achieving the American dream is concerned.

Willy is the main protagonist in the play and has been used by Miller to show how the American dream negatively affects his lifestyle. Willy is a salesman and hungry for success to the extent of being jealous of people who have succeeded in achieving the American dream. He is jealous of his brother's quick success. This implies that he cannot go for any help in wanting to know how to achieve the dream or being successful. His pride is what makes him fall and fail to accomplish his desires towards providing enough support to his family.

Willy is as well jealous of his friend Bernard due to his success in achieving his dream. Bernard is popular and successful. At some point Willy says, " The man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want." Therefore, this fact makes Willy have the misleading perception that popularity and fame can are aspects that can drive a person towards achieving the American dream. This is shown when Willy wants his children to be as famous as Bernard's children. This is a misleading notion that results to the failure of Willy's strong desire to achieve the American dream.

Contrary to the negative results of trying to pursue the American dream of success and happiness in life, Miller has shown the positive impacts of the American Dream to some of the characters in the play. Ben has been used by Miller to show how successful some people may be when achieving the American dream. Ben is Willy's brother who is hardworking and determined.

However, Willy is not happy about Ben's success because Miller tells us that he is really jealous of his brother's success. He is so jealous that he cannot heed any advice from his brother. From Willy's behavior, Miller tries to show that the American dream is not a competition amongst individuals but it should be a competition against oneself. This implies that if Willy would have heeded to some of the advice given by Ben, he would have moved a step further in achieving the American dream.

Bernard, Willy's friend, is another example of how many people want to become successful in life. Bernard is popular and successful contrary to Willy. Bernard is quite determined and ready to help anyone who is in need including Willy. "A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man." (Bernard Act 1). By employing Bernard as one of the characters in the play, Miller tries to show that the American dream should not be locked to oneself but should be shared amongst the entire population. Bernard is kind hearted and successful in ensuring that his family is comfortable. Bernard experiences limited financial constraints and his family is therefore happy. However, his success is not brought about by his popularity and fame as Willy thinks. His hard work is what makes him achieve the good things in life. From Bernard's point of view, success can only be experienced from being persistent and highly aggressive in pursuing one's own goals. Bernard believes in offering a helping hand to anyone who is in need. However, his kind hearted helping hand is turned down by his friend Willy. Willy is jealous of Bernard's success just as the way as he is jealous of his brother Ben.

Singleman is another character in the play used by Miller in depicting the American dream in a positive way. Single is also popular and successful in business and also the community. Singleman is wise and ready to face the different challenges posed by life. He views challenges as steps that motivate a person towards achieving their dream. Success is Singleman's major focus. This is the case in the whole of the America where everyone wants to be financially independent in pursuing different goals in life. Miller shows that success will not always be appreciated by everyone. This is clearly highlighted by the fact that Willy's reminisce of Singleman's death. Willy's thoughts are accompanied by many mourners at Singleman's funeral. Miller reveals that not everyone will be supportive in road to success. This gives the implication that Willy is a bad influence to his family and the society at large.

Miller reveals that not everyone is meant to be successful in life and that luck may as well act as a way through which people achieve their dreams. This is shown by the fast rate at which Willy's brother, Ben, becomes successful. Ben is a determined and hardworking person in achieving his goals. However, this fact does not fully support his quick rise towards achieving the American dream. Miller therefore reveals that some people will just get lucky in achieving their dream goals. This may be the reason why Willy is so jealous of his brother's quick success.

Miller shows that Willy's view of the American Dream is very different to that of his friends in the society. This strongly supports the notion that different people will have different perceptions of the American dream. A wrong

perception about the American will automatically result to failure and frustration. Willy is frustrated because his salary is very little and cannot fully support all the needs of his family. Contrary, Ben, Bernard and Singleman are successful and determined people in the play. If Willy would have heeded to one of their advice, may be he would have began his way to achieving the American dream of success. Miller therefore tends to show that everyone needs help at some point in life and the person should decline the help as long as it in good faith.

## **Conclusion**

Every individual will have a different way of describing dream goals. Dreams are at some point viewed from a national perspective and the general populations of a country might share common goals in life. This has been properly highlighted by Miller in “ Death of a salesman”. The play has a sad ending as the main protagonist does not live to see his American dream. This is evidenced when Willy’s son says, “ I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have - to come out number-one man. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him.” (Death of a Salesman, Act 2). However, most of the people with whom Willy is associated are successful in achieving their dreams. To achieve dreams in life, a person will have to view it from a positive perspective.

## **Reference:**

Miller A. (1998). *Death of A salesman*, New York: Penguin.