

# The death of a salesman



If you'll have a close look on the American culture and analyze its values you will possibly see that being a businessman is one of the vital components of the American dream. Those usually are successful businessmen who are called "the self-made people" and whose careers are the example to follow for most of the U.S. dwellers. An average American rarely believes it's possible to become successful and valued being a carpenter, gardener or a nurse; it is selling that is seen as the easiest way to becoming rich and respected. Willy Longman is just another victim of this stereotype.

A man who's capable of creating beautiful things with his hands, Willy has spent thirty-four years employed as a salesman. It's shown from the very beginning in the play that his career was not a very successful one. "After all the highways, and the trains, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive." – Willy says. His earnings were modest throughout his entire career, and he didn't get satisfaction from the occupation he had chosen. Willy Longman is a very ambitious man, and being unable to reach success on his work field makes him ruin his life and the lives of his beloved family members.

Willy is like the desperate lover, as he likes the occupation of the salesman very much, but he doesn't have enough social qualities and abilities for to be successful in this field. Due to this Willy begins to live in his own daydreams and fantasies, where he is a successful man, and where he is loved and respected by the people who live in New England, an area, where he works. "I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England." – Willy says, but it is rather what he wants to be, but not what he actually is.

Howard Wagner, the present owner of the Wagner Company where Willy Longman works tells the protagonist he's become detrimental to business, thus he refused to give Willy job in New York, besides he actually fires him. Willy doesn't have the money to pay his bills, thus he has "to loan" them from his friend and neighbor Charley. Willy feels that all of his life was spent in vain, that he didn't reach the success he was longing for. The protagonist's psychic exhibits the protection mechanisms and Willy pretends that everything is okay with him, and during some time he actually believes it himself.

Willy is the victim of the stereotypes that have been ruling the minds of numerous Americans for many years already; in his eyes the word successful is equal to the word businessman. This is the reason for which he makes his sons suffer too. Both Biff and Happy become the victim's of their father's unhealthy longing for success as he understood it. The boys grew up with an image of a looser as the example before their eyes, thus being a looser is the only pattern of behavior both of them have.

They also took the understanding of success from their father, and both of them are unhappy as they cannot conform to these standards. As Biff and Happy are Willy's sons, they have no more talent to being businessman than he has. Besides, they've seen only the poor example their father was, thus they just don't know how to be successful. Biff is the first victim of his father's longing for success. To make his son listen to his advice about the career and other vital life choices, Willy creates some ideal image of him for his son.

Thus when Biff sees his father committing adultery, he is disappointed not only in his personality, but in his ideals also. That is why Biff refuses to go to college despite the scholarship he is offered, and goes away from his parents to live on his own. Fifteen years later he's back to his parent's house, after trying to find his life path. Being back Biff begins to feel the same pressure he ran away from when he was a teenager. Biff is his father's main hope; Willy feels that his older son has to accomplish what he didn't manage to.

Fortunately Biff realizes that the career, his father chose for him, and his effort to flee from it, are ridiculous. " I looked up and I saw they sky ... and I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been. " - Biff Longman says. Biff realizes that if he wants to be happy he has to live this life the way he wants, and not the way his father encourages or prohibits him, he's the only one who breaks the glass world of illusions in the end of the play. Happy, Willy's younger son also suffers from his fathers actions. Happy has always been the " second son" for Willy.

All of the younger boy's life has passed in the shadow of his elder brother his father put all of his hopes on. And, of course he was also affected by the persuasion that he has to be successful. Unlike Biff Happy doesn't understand the ridiculousness of his father's beliefs and principles, and he believes that Willy's death was a worthy one. " He had a good dream". - Happy says about his father. " 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" Like Biff, Happy is unable to conform to his father's standards of being " successful".

He feels miserable because of it, and he makes the attempts to compensate this feeling by having lots of women and cars around him. Happy surrounds himself with the attributes of success that count for most of the society, but he is unhappy, as he cannot conform to his father's standards. Linda Longman, Willy's wife and the mother of his two sons also becomes the victim of Willy's image of life and success. Linda's main goal is to make everyone feel comfortable, thus she's unable to break the illusionary world her husband dwells in.

Linda suffers seeing what has become of her husband and sons, and from the fact that she is unable to do anything to solve this problem. Linda also notices that her husband tried to commit suicide, and it is very painful for her. She says nothing about this fact to Willy, as she doesn'tt want to embarrass him. The death of a salesman is a story of the illusions and stereotypes, and the consequences they can cause. The author tries to prove the readers that people should decide for themselves what to do with their life according to the abilities and inclinations he or she has, regardless of the opinion the society has about it.