

# Analyzing the psychoanalysis theory of sigmund freud

[Psychology](#)



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## **Psychoanalytic Lens**

Death of a Salesman is the epitome of the American Dream gone wrong. Willy Loman is the average family salesman whose life spirals out of control. We are able to see all of Willy's flaws throughout the frequent flashbacks shown in Arthur Miller's play. It is helpful to look at this play through a psychoanalytic lens. This kind of lens is used by psychiatrists to discover a person's unconscious. They study a person's wants, thoughts, and desires that are underneath the surface. Things that live inside of you from day to day. Willy Loman would be the perfect patient of study for this lens. Willy is constantly living in a dream-like state because he is incapable of accepting reality. Throughout the play we see several examples of flashbacks of Willy's past. Willy is living out his last days in these flashbacks and lies in order to create a better present for himself and his family in his mind. Willy's logic is strictly emotional rather than rational. Viewers and readers of this play would benefit from looking at Willy and the Loman's through this lens because there is so much more underneath than there is on the surface.

From the very start of the play, Willy finds himself in a sea of lies and deceit. When he returns from his trip because he was having trouble driving, he immediately lies to his wife Linda. Willy says, " I did five hundred gross in Providence and seven hundred gross in Boston" (1681). Willy knows that his family is struggling financially, so he acts as if he is making much more money than he actually is. In reality, Willy did not do well on his last trip. He knows that his family is in some serious debt and that he is too insecure for his job. Willy recognizes that he is not appreciated or well-liked at his job and

has trouble making sales because he is self-doubting. The scene soon flips into Willy having another breakdown. Willy says to his wife Linda, “ I’m fat. I’m very—foolish to look at, Linda” (1683). He forces himself to believe that he is struggling because he is an overweight middle-aged man. Every now and again reality will get the best of Willy, and he accepts the truth. Although, this truth is just another fault that rests in his unconscious which eventually kills him.

Through Willy’s flashbacks and lying he has nearly destroyed his relationships with his two boys Biff and Happy. Willy’s pride once came from his two boys because they were attractive, talented young men. Now they are mid-thirties and don’t have much of a plan. A story that repeatedly haunts Willy is when Biff found him cheating on Linda in a hotel. After Biff puts the pieces together he becomes enraged. He yells at Willy saying, “ Don’t touch me, you—liar! You fake! You phony little fake! You fake” (1726). Biff had only come to be comforted by his father after failing math, but he found himself in a reality from hell. Willy remembers this incident numerous times throughout the play because it haunts his conscious. His horrible relationship with Biff forces him to remember all the wrong and bad things he has done in his life. No matter how many lies he tells to avoid the present, his past has made this his reality.

Willy’s flashbacks remind him of how horrible his life is and all the reasons why that is. He tries to cover up his faults through lies, but they eventually become too much for him to bear. There are many more examples of why the psychoanalytic lens is perfect for studying the life of Willy Loman. A

person's subconscious is what defines their reality. People can ignore their past all they want and cover up their actions with lies, but at the end of the day the past is what makes up a person. Willy Loman is a prime example of someone who loses himself in his past. He is incapable of moving forward so he constantly revisits his past memories, good and bad, in order to escape the reality of his life. When he finally realizes and accepts what his reality is, he takes action and commits suicide for the ultimate escape.