

Example of a Personal Narrative Essay

Topic: My Greatest Life Lesson

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Growing up, I always heard people say work hard pays; that working hard is a virtue. I never really understood the meaning of these words until I reached the age where my parents allowed me to have my first job. My dad always insisted that I should learn how to give and not ask. What could I possibly give? I always thought. Although my mum was by an undisputed defender, I think she had come to see sense in my father's argument. She stopped giving me my monthly allowance and asked me to look for a job.

Christmas is a season of good tidings for merrymakers and entrepreneurial characters. My childhood friend was one of the latter. Although we grew up together and got in trouble together, Mike and I were two sides of the same coin. I was an introvert and a bookworm, and Mike was an extrovert and a merrymaker. His added advantage over me was that he came from a family of entrepreneurs. Therefore, while I saw the festive season as another time of the year when people overindulge, he saw it as a perfect time to make money. Ironically, I needed this side of him, given my present predicament.

Mike was not of the "work hard pays" school of thought. He subscribed to the "work smart" school of thought. If anyone asked me the difference, I couldn't tell. When I told him about my predicament, he saw a business partner. He confided in me about his business idea- making Christmas trees and selling them on credit. I thought, "I didn't hear him well," so I asked him to repeat what he had just said. Of course, he noticed my disbelief and lack of enthusiasm in his idea. At this point, he told me he had researched and realized that only one shop sold Christmas trees, and the price was exorbitant. This meant that there was room for competition. Before he could go further with his "story," I reminded him that starting a business, leave alone competing with an established enterprise, required capital. He told me, "not really." That word got my attention. He said to me that all we had to do was cut down some trees and use our creativity to make beautiful Christmas trees. Mike "volunteered"—whatever that meant—to supply any needed material from the family supermarket. To make the story short, we made our Christmas trees and hit the road running.

News about our Christmas trees spread like wildfire. Mike's decision to publish pamphlets advertising our product was a genius marketing trick. Although we were willing to give people the product on credit, a majority ended up paying in cash. Within three days, we had sold about 20 Christmas trees, and as they say, the rest is history.

My parents' decision to stop my monthly allowance served to teach me the value of work. However, it was my entrepreneurial adventure with Mike that taught me that working smart is better than working hard.