
The Value Of Money In “The Death Of A Salesman”

The idea of money being the key to happiness is a continual theme in the play “The death of a Salesman”. The symbiotic relationship between working and spending time with your family is lost in this play as Willie is so determined that he and his sons should be successful. As a human being in a capitalist society, it's easy to fall in the pattern of becoming greedy and always looking to make more money. Not only for materialistic things, but also to be able to provide for your family. We live in a world where money is a factor, it is needed to survive and many people connect money to happiness. Money isn't everything but almost everything needs money. Willie's destructive behavior by obsessing over money, economic success and social standing unfortunately leads to his death in the end of the play.

As the US is known for their hard working citizens not being paid enough and giving the least paid vacations days, it does not come as a shock that the US has a very high rate of mental illnesses as depression and anxiety. Willie suffered from hallucinations due to the stress from his social standing and money. In the book *The overworked American* by Juliet Schor, Juliet argues that “Americans are literally working themselves to death as jobs contribute to heart disease, hypertension, gastric problems, depression, exhaustion, and a variety of other ailments”. Karl Marx also advocated about having the right conditions at work. This play is taking place in the 1940's when the declining hours all of a sudden stopped and the new era of overtime working effectively increased. These work conditions and stress lead to mental and physical problems that in this case became Willies death. This play is a great example of what work can do to you and also affect your loved ones.

Would Willie still stress about money as he did when he was demoted from a salary employee to a commission employee? Probably not. Being demoted to a lower position at his work, this affected him financially.

I can't stop thinking what outcome Willie's life would have he was granted a tenure as a salary employee. He probably wouldn't have killed himself just so his family could benefit from the 25,000 dollars insurance money.

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