
Death Of A Salesman: The Theme Of Immaturity

In Arthur Miller's Pulitzer prize-winning play *Death of a Salesman*, the audience is presented with the dysfunctional Loman family where most members lack maturity. This, in turn, fuels the growing rift between each member of the family. Willy, the main breadwinner of the family, perceives respect and wealth as success. Unfortunately, Willy does little to change his view, even as he faces the consequences.

At the beginning of the play, as Willy returns home, we can already see signs of his immaturity at play. In a dialogue between him and Linda, he says "I suddenly couldn't drive anymore. The car kept going off onto the shoulder, y'know?" This inattention displays Willy's desire to drop all of his responsibilities and leave the harsh reality he has to face every day. Of course, Willy has a lot on his plate: he has to take care of his family and pay off loans; he worries about the future of his children; he has to travel hundreds of miles every day just to live paycheck to paycheck. However, the biggest stressor in Willy's life is that he views himself as an unsuccessful salesman because of the situation he is in. Willy is no better off than when he started. This stress, however, is introduced by Willy himself, who views a successful individual as one with an unlimited amount of wealth and respect. In an introduction to the play, Christopher Bigsby puts it best when he writes "If personal meaning, in this cheerleader society, lies in success, then a failure must threaten identity itself."

Even when Willy was fired, after all, hope was lost, he refused to change his position. After Willy had asked Charley for a loan in order to pay his insurance, Charley offers him a job. Willy declines the offer and tells him that he can not work for him. He goes on to say that he thought if a "man was impressive, and well-liked, that nothing-" Charley interrupts and says:

Why must everybody like you? Who liked J.P. Morgan? Was he impressive? In a Turkish bath, he'd look like a butcher. But with his pockets on he was very well-liked. Now listen, Willy, I know you don't like me, and nobody can say I'm in love with you, but I'll give you a job because-just for the hell of it, put it that way. Now, what do you say?"

Willy is so caught up in his impractical philosophy that he is clearly avoiding ways to better his position. This clearly shows how immature Willy is that he is willing to avoid any help in order to satisfy his unwise beliefs.

Willy continues to display immaturity through the use of lies. He uses these lies to fabricate his own self-worth. When Biff and Happy meet up with Willy at the restaurant, they proceed to talk about Biff's interaction with his former employer. However, Willy is not interested in what Biff has to say about the "truth" and "facts": "...The gist of it is that I haven't got a story left in my head, Biff. So don't give me a lecture about facts and aspects. I am not interested. Now, what've you got to say to me?" Willy pushes his son into a lie because it will help him cope with the situation he is in and he will finally be able to reach his notion of success through his children. Unfortunately, this isn't the case as Biff doesn't fall into the family's habit of lying and finally gives Willy the truth, something he never wanted to hear.

Throughout the play, Willy ignores anything that would shake his philosophy on life: being

wealthy and well-liked will get you everywhere. Unfortunately, Willy goes to great lengths to support this idea, which leads to his tragic and untimely death.