

(Student Name)

English (Class Number)

Final Draft of Rhetorical Analysis Essay

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The Passionate Case for Getting Lost

One evening, I accidentally took the N train downtown all the way to Canal Street in Manhattan. It would be 20 minutes until the next train uptown and I was starving. It would be too late to eat by the time I got home, so in a fit of desperation, I exited the station to find food in the bustling Chinatown. I wandered the streets and eventually found a restaurant with the most delicious (and cheapest) dumplings I ever had. Now, I go back there every chance I get. Life is sometimes unexpected, but it can yield interesting results. In a stadium full of graduates, their families and faculty members, Steve Jobs' 2005 commencement speech at Stanford challenges graduates to bravely pursue their passions and discover different opportunities that will help them after college. Through a simple structure of three personal stories in a 15-minute speech, Jobs utilizes logos, pathos and ethos to address the uncertainty of life after college to a stadium of college graduates who will be leaving school and starting new lives.

Jobs' begins his speech addressing his audience by saying, "I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world" (Jobs 1). The speech makes it clear the audience are graduates from a prestigious college. The listener knows this is not intended specifically for the parents of the graduates or the faculty because Jobs uses the second person when he says "your commencement." This implies that this is targeted to the students because it is their commencement.

The first constraint to Jobs is that he has a limited time to speak because he is only one of many speakers at the commencement and he must make it relevant to his audience of college

graduates. Jobs uses these constraints to his advantage when he says, “Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That’s it. No big deal. Just three stories” (Jobs 1). The use of only three stories implies that he is distilling his life’s lessons into only the most relevant advice for graduates so that in a limited time they may learn how to take advantage of the uncertainty of life after college. Another constraint is the academic setting which does not commonly use technical language found in Jobs’ technology industry. To address this, he uses short and informal language which implies that Jobs wants to be easily understood and non-intimidating which helps promote trust to his audience of young people.

Through three personal stories, Jobs responds to the exigence or situation of uncertainty as college graduates move into an uncertain future. He states, “Don’t waste [time] living someone else’s life...have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary” (Jobs 5). Therefore, his response to the exigence is to pursue one’s passions and intuitions to find success. Words like “courage” and “heart” imply an emphatic tone that suggests it appeals to pathos in order to effectively respond to this exigence.

Jobs’ “first story is about connecting the dots” (Jobs 1). Despite his parent’s wishes for him to stay in college, Jobs dropped out because he did not see the value and instead took classes that he found interesting, like calligraphy. He explains how if he “had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces...[and] personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do” (Jobs 2). Through this example, Jobs addresses how uncertainty in one’s decisions is not always a negative thing and could lead to success. The example of the Mac’s successful influence validates Jobs’ experience and encourages students to trust their instincts and follow their passions.

His “second story is about love and loss” (Jobs 3). He describes how he was kicked out of his own company, but “the heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed [him] to enter one of the most creative periods of [his] life” (Jobs 3). His description of heavy and light emotions implies that Jobs is appealing to pathos in order to connect with his first story and argue that following one’s passion in uncertainty can lead to success.

His “third story is about death” (Jobs 4). Jobs explains how he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer but “it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery” (Jobs 5). With that example he then states, “No one wants to die...your time is limited...have the courage to follow your heart and intuition” (Jobs 5). A near death experience could be interpreted as a highly emotional experience and implies that Jobs is appealing to pathos in order to emphasize the importance of following one’s passion to his audience.

Jobs appeals to logos, pathos and ethos very effectively in his speech to communicate his message to his audience. For example, he starts out by saying, “We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4,000 employees. We had just released our finest creation – the Macintosh” (Jobs 3). Before starting this anecdote, Jobs establishes that he is a co-founder of a very successful company using statistics. The use of quantitative data appeals to logos and provides credibility to what he is saying.

Jobs’ setting up of his credibility and initial circumstances is important because he will later talk about how he was fired from Apple and how he felt he “had dropped the baton as it was being passed to [him as he] met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly” (Jobs 3). This demonstrates Jobs’ values and integrity by him taking

responsibility for his actions and then apologizing to his peers, which suggests he is appealing to ethos in this part of his speech. It is particularly effective here because it makes the audience empathize with Job's values and understand his point of view.

Jobs continues his speech by saying, "I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me – I still loved what I did" (Jobs 3). Words such as "failure" and "loved" are very strong and emotional. This suggests that it could evoke a strong emotional response for the audience. Therefore, making them further empathize with Job's feelings and passion in addition to his values and point of view from earlier.

For many college graduates, the unknown can be a scary thing. The security of what is known can be comforting, but sometimes unfulfilling. To address this problem or exigence, Steve Jobs uses his speech to encourage graduates to pursue their passions, explore the unknown and find the right path. Nowadays, I do not mind getting lost on the subway. I know it can lead me to unexpected places, and if I am brave and curious enough, it can yield surprising and often delicious results.

(Teacher Note: Technically, the "Works Cited" page should be its own page. I will permit you to include it on the last page you write if you have the space.)

Works Cited

Jobs, Steve. "Text of Steve Jobs' Commencement Address (2005)." *Stanford News*, 12 June 2017, news.stanford.edu/2005/06/14/jobs-061505/. Accessed 1 March 2019.