

Example by StudyDriver

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What is a Human Life Worth? Example

What is a human life worth? To you? To your family and loved ones? The value of a life can be assessed through personal, emotional, and monetary standpoints. Apple CEO Steve Jobs gave an inspiring speech to the Stanford graduating class of 2005 when he told 3 stories each containing valuable lessons on the importance of life and death from a personal standpoint. Other people like Hamlet, a character in one of Shakespeare's famous plays, looks at life from a purely emotional standpoint. In the play, Hamlet was faced with tragedy and questioned whether or not his life was worth living. Both Hamlet and Jobs put a certain amount of internal value on their own lives, but government and insurance agencies face the daunting task to put specific monetary values on people's lives every day. I agree with Steve Jobs and his views on life and death, although, I do acknowledge the views of Hamlet and the importance of agencies supporting families who have recently lost a loved one. In Steve Jobs commencement speech at Stanford University, the successful college-dropout made bold claims with his personal views on the meaning of life and death. Among other statements, he advised the graduating college students that life is short so there is no reason not to follow your heart (Jobs). I agree with this statement and the message that Jobs was conveying. Jobs was saying that death is inevitable and he lives his life as if he has nothing to lose. He encourages people to follow their heart and do the same. He followed this statement with a story of his own life and his short-lived battle with cancer and how those experiences gave him a new perspective on the value of life

and the importance of death. Jobs had a very optimistic view on both life and death and clearly states that throughout his speech. Jobs used his adversity as motivation to follow his heart and live every day like it's his last. In contrast, Hamlet has pessimistic views on both life and death due to the recent murder of his father. In his soliloquy, he contemplates whether his life is worth living and if death would be a better resolution or just as bad as life. He describes his life as a sea of troubles and says he no longer wishes to bear the whips and scorns of time (Hamlet). From reading Hamlet's soliloquy, it is evident that Hamlet does not value his life and his views on death are equally as pessimistic. Hamlet's negative views are contradicting to Jobs in the sense that Hamlet does not value neither life nor death whereas Jobs puts a great importance on both. Although I do not agree with Hamlet's views, I acknowledge that when faced with tragedy it is difficult to see things clearly. When I was 7, I suffered the loss of my newborn sister due to heart failure. For months, I cried and was upset at the fact that life could be so unforgiving. My perspective on life changed drastically, much like Hamlet's did. But after a period of time I came to realize that life is valuable and we are faced with these tragedies so we can use them to inspire others like Steve Jobs did. If you are looking at the value of a life from the government's point of view, a life is only worth the amount of money that person made, or were projected to make. For example, the families of the victims of 9/11 were reasonably compensated for the loss of their family member. After evaluating factors such as age, annual income, and number of children, the Value of Life Calculator determined the amount of money the victim's families would receive. On The Value of Life Calculator website, they claim their purpose is to, help assess your financial value to those you love (Value of Life Calculator). But how can they put a price on a person's life? Economically, a life may be only worth around \$1 million but to the people who lost a loved one, no amount of money would be able to fill that void. So, although I acknowledge that it is important to prevent families from suffering financial hardship when faced with a loss of a loved one, I believe a price tag should never be placed on a human life. Each human life is unique, and no two lives are of equal importance or value - and no two people value life the same way. In the face of death, Jobs found even more reasons to value his life and from that he acquired a new-found appreciation of the concept of death. I agree with Jobs and the influential claims he made in his speech. When faced with hardships, like Hamlet, it can be hard to see the value that your life holds. Although I disagree with Hamlet, it can often be difficult to be optimistic when you are faced with tragedy. When valuing a life from a monetary standpoint, I do not believe a price can be put on a person's life. Although the financial

compensation may help pay the bills, I do not believe a human life has a monetary value. When it comes down to it, everybody dies eventually no matter how you value your life. So, as Steve Jobs quoted in his speech, if you live each day as if it is your last, someday you'll most certainly be right.