

Intro #1

Give Your Shirt but Please, Keep Your Pants

Who I am will NOT be compromised. Ever. Not for you, or anyone else. Compromise, sometimes easier said than done, is an action everyone has taken at sometime in ^{her} their life; but when does compromise change from a successful problem solving technique, to a self-damaging sacrifice? Growing up with an older sibling, compromise was something I heard a lot about. When nothing could be agreed on Mom would come in with a soft voice and make everything better by coaxing us to make even sacrifices and settle our differences. Compromise and Sacrifice: It seems the two go hand in hand. However, if compromising is only making simple, personal sacrifices is it possible to sacrifice too much of ourselves? Can we be self-damaging by sacrificing our morals and our pride, or do the ends justify the means? I've always thought "striking a deal" was a simple way to wipe my hands clean of a disagreement, but just how long can a deal last? Through a lot of time and thought I have wandered around compromise, to gaze upon it from another side. Maybe "finding a happy medium" is not all it has been cracked up to be. Maybe compromise won't help Jack and Diane out of the woods next time things aren't perfect, or maybe it will. All I'm saying is that compromise could be fooling us; perhaps it is a little more rotten than we really think.

Intro #2

Independent Thinking

I'm sixteen. I have a car. I'm ready to go. And now that I've gotten my driver's license, I'm getting to experience a new level of independence. And soon I'll be going away to college attaining yet another level of independence. Then maybe, living on my own will be another. Certain levels of independence are experienced at both the individual and societal level. Independence is as important to the individual as it is to society as a whole.

Intro #3

Anyone Who Wants to Die, Raise Your Hand!

Every day, we make up lists in our mind of what to accomplish, whether it is to finish homework, to write a novel, or to stop smoking. We are so obsessed with the thought of dying that every action we take is to slow down the process of death, or to cushion our biggest fall. Death is the glue that binds every single person together; like the person beside you, you are a dead man walking. The anxiety you have leading up to the moment you die will mold your life. In my pilgrimage to find a greater truth in the word *anxiety*, I found out a huge secret. I discovered ways to beat the clock. To escape time, you need to understand that you are not invincible, accept the fact that your heart will one day stop beating, and start a revolution. Seize the day, grab it while you can and change the world around you. I found that people's biggest anxiety is being forgotten after they die. Will what you accomplished be remembered? Will your life escape the disintegration of time? Will you let gravity swallow the best of you? This is your life, and it's ending one second at a time. Feel anxious yet?

Intro #4

Beauty Can Be Ugly

Victor Marie Hugo once said, "Beauty has only one form, ugliness has a thousand" (Jones 1133). In our society that we live in today, it has been embedded in our mind that this idea is true, but I believe this "truth" from the past has become false in modern society. When we look at our society overall ugliness has changed to only one form, and beauty has a thousand. Our society has grown to impact and change the lives of all of us in some way or another. Now, as most people do, we could blame Hollywood and our society for our growing problems, and they do have a lot to do with how our newer generations are evolving. But we can not put all the blame on them. Are we not able to be confident, self-aware individuals who reject the corruption in our society? Truthfully we are not, and I don't know if some people are even aware how the media is impacting our beliefs. Even though we're capable of making our own decisions, it is sad to say the media and our society decide what beauty and ugliness is.

Intro # 5

Sacrifice vs. Anarchy

An offering, concession, loss, relinquishment or surrendering (McCutcheon 444)^{lc.} Which angle does society today take on the idea of sacrifice as opposed to that of the beliefs in the past? Many different ideas have been around about sacrifice, from that of the Aztecs thousands of years ago, who would surrender human lives, to the milder forms of sacrifice for relationships and love today. I think that over time sacrifice has not only stayed the same in meaning but also in form. The main thing that people would associate with sacrifice is the surrendering of a life, whether it be human or animal, to a deity in order to gain a better life. I believe that the way people act and surrender themselves or others for a purpose has been happening since the beginning of time without change, and has merely broadened its form into different types of sacrifice. As a practice in religion and society, sacrifice is needed in order to keep the world from the anarchy in which it would produce without it. If there was no Sacrifice, would the world be full of chaos?

Intro # 6

The Sacrificial Prize

Would you ever take a bullet in order to save your best friend? Sacrifices are being made daily. Every single day, people risk their own lives in attempt to save someone else's. Your life is a great sacrifice, but there are other kinds of sacrifices that do not involve death. What is the 'ultimate' sacrifice?