

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Sample

Steve Jobs' "You've Got to Find What You Love" Speech

In the speech "You've Got to Find What You Love," by Steve Jobs, the author talks about certain events in his life that led him to become the successful CEO of Apple company and of Pixar Animation Studios. He explores with great details, the fact that he dropped out of college, was fired from a company that was founded by him, and how he feared he was going to die after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer to explain how all these events helped him find what he loved to do and was able to do it. He talks about how his mother was a young unmarried college graduate student, who wanted him to give him up to parents who were college graduates but, later allowed a non-college graduate couple to adopt him because his adopted parents promised that he would attend college someday.

However, in this speech, he admits that he never graduated college and dropping out of college after only six months of attending college was the best life changing decisions he ever made. Thus, by using descriptions of his personal life, logical reasoning, his personal experiences as a child from a broken family and appealing to the reader's emotions of sympathy and empathy, the author persuades the audience that making good decisions can help a person find their calling in life. In this speech, the author more on ethos than he did pathos and logos since he provided too much information about his personal experiences. Every story the author mentioned throughout his speech was about him except for the ending when he talks about a man named Stewart Brand.

Moreover, the author's usage of ethos in this speech can be found where he asserts that, getting fired from Apple was more beneficial to him because it gave him back the opportunity to start afresh with his new-found passion. This feeling led him to create two new companies in the next five years which were known as NeXT and Pixar. Furthermore, during this period he fell in love with a woman who later became his wife (Jobs 2-3). This emphasizes on how the author felt about being a major failure in his career when he got fired. The purpose of this quote is to suggest that everyone fails in doing something at some point in life. However, being able to pick yourself up from such a situation shows that you possess true determination to achieve whatever you truly desire. Therefore, the quote above provides the author with the credibility of being a hard worker.

Pathos is the second most used element of persuasion in Steve Jobs' commencement speech that was addressed to Stanford University graduates. Pathos can be seen in the first part of the speech when the author states that, he did not have housing after he dropped out of college, so he would sleep on the floor of his friend's room while he kept attending classes. Furthermore, he was so poor that he had to return coke bottle just to buy food with the 5¢ deposits. Lastly, he states that, he had walk for a long distance to a temple just to get a good meal each week (Jobs 1-2). In this statement, the author appeals to his audience emotion of empathy by describing the hardships he faced after dropping out of Reed College but kept dropping in on classes that were interesting to him. He does this to suggest that even though he dropped out of college, he did not just give up on his education. Instead, he diverted his attention towards learning calligraphy, which he felt was truly important to him. Thus, his usage of pathos was effective since, his audience were college students who can relate the feeling of being uncertain about what they would want to study. Moreover, the author did not use as many logos as he did ethos and pathos.

Even though the author used a significant amount of certain persuasive elements to persuade his audience, his persuasion would have been more effective if he used more logical reasonings and not just personal experiences and emotional appeals. An example of logos can be found on page three paragraph four which states that, "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... a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired" (Jobs 3). The quote above discusses how the author's hard work and determination paid off in the end when he built the company he started with his friend in his parent's garage into a 2-billion-dollar company during a 10-year period. Showing how the author found what he loved to do and became successful doing it, even though he was not a college graduate. In addition, the quote supports his point about love and loss since he loved his company but, lost it when he got fired. Thus, the author's usage logical reasoning in his speech was effective.

Lastly, the author's usage of the elements of persuasion mentioned in the paragraphs above was effective in persuading his audience due to how he swiftly transitioned from one element to the other in the last story. In this part of his speech, Jobs utilizes both ethos and pathos to inform his audience about the notion of death. For instance, Jobs states that, when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, doctors told him he had less than six months left to live since his cancer was the kind that was almost incurable (Jobs 3). The statement above could be an example that represents both pathos and ethos since the statement could be seen in two ways. One part of the quote provides the author with credibility while the other part appeals to the audience emotion sympathy. The pathos of the statement refers

to the author's close encounter with death. This method was effective because the author used his death, a relatable concept in his attempt to persuade his audience.

In conclusion, through the author's use of logical reasoning, personal experiences, and emotional appeals, he can accomplish his purpose of persuading his audience about the importance of "finding what you love." His first story helps explain how one cannot connect the dots going forward but instead going backwards. In addition, the second story helps the understand the author's love for what he does and what when went through after losing it. The last story of his speech talks about how he lives each day as though it was his last, meaning that he is prepared to die if death came. However, he became afraid when he thought he was going to die when he had cancer. Therefore, Steve Jobs' utilization of the mentioned elements of persuasion, provided a compelling argument that was effective in persuading his audience.



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