Persuasive Essay Sample 1 Into The Wild Gingrich

Solitude, the most Companionable Companion

Dear Pablo,

I understand that you have recently given thought to the idea of traveling to Alaska to live in the wild, and that you have been debating over whether or not to go on this adventure. While you contemplate on your decision, I would like to say that I believe that going off “into the wild” is a very good idea. Living by yourself, depending on yourself, and learning to appreciate life are all very positive things that may occur if you go on this journey of self-discovery. That being said, the danger is astronomical, and it is imperative that you understand this and prepare for it. Chris McCandless possessed the same desire to live in the nature as you, but his extreme naivety and arrogance led to his pitiful demise. I suggest you take caution on your travels, assuming you take this trip, of course.

Christopher McCandless, a man of self-reliance, a man of mystery, a man not unlike yourself. He was fed up with the posh American society he lived in, with the pompous shopping malls, meaningless education, and lack of meaning in life. To escape this undesirable world in which he lived, Chris left home to embark on a journey to Alaska, where he wanted to live alone in the nature, surviving off of pure personal instinct and abilities. Despite his unfortunate demise, Chris McCandless’s motives and beliefs were indeed valid. In many ways, you, my friend, are extremely similar to McCandless. I know for a fact that you are not happy with your current life, and you have told me yourself of your strong dislike for the meaningless daily routine that so many Americans fall into. If I were you, I would follow my instinct and take on the challenge that the wild is providing for you. Chris McCandless said himself, “so many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, conservatism,” (Krakauer 58). This applies perfectly to the situation we are discussing! You are living in very unhappy circumstances right now, so take the initiative and leave this life behind for a while! If you don’t go on this adventure, I believe you will live to regret that decision for many years to come. Do not end up like the majority of our population: people who live fake lives shrouded in unhappiness. Rather, let go of your worries and do what’s logically best for you, which, based on your unpleasant feelings towards society and life at the moment, is to embark on this potentially life-changing adventure.

Coupled with this monumental odyssey are many significant benefits, possibly the most important being self-reliance. Going off to live alone in the wilderness will make you completely reliant on yourself and your abilities, and it will teach you how to survive on your own without society. This is a great thing, for today’s society, as I know you believe, has much wrong with it. Even besides that, the ability of self-reliance (if that is even possible today) is a priceless skill to have, no matter the society or time period you live in. A journey such as this may in fact turn out to be the most important part of your life; you may find out who you truly are and what life really means to you. Seeing as how I’ve always lived in society, never straying away from my home, it is difficult to imagine how one would survive in the wild. But, it is definitely possible with the right motivation and preparedness. After living in society all your life, always surrounded by mass amounts of people, do you not want to experience the solitude provided by the wilderness? In *Into the Wild*, McCandless says at one point, “you can read about this stuff, but you can’t understand it until you live it,” (Krakauer 114). If you go on this trip, it will change your life for the better; it will transform you into an entirely new, more wise and independent person. I whole-heartedly think you should embrace this idea of yours with the utmost enthusiasm, just as Chris McCandless did.

Now, I mention Chris McCandless for a number of significant reasons. In my opinion, you should strive to model your adventure off that of Chris McCandless. While it ended in tragedy, he had enthusiasm, belief, and a true desire to go “into the wild.” On his expedition, he found out far, far more about himself than he ever imagined, and he met a multitude of wonderful and interesting people along the way. You have this same unique opportunity before you now, a chance to travel to Alaska, meet people on the way, and do amazing good for yourself. However, use Chris McCandless as a model for both the positive aspects of his journey and the negative aspects. While he did have incredible enthusiasm, and a gargantuan belief in himself, his life ended tragically because he was naïve and arrogant. Having always succeeded in life, Chris *knew* that he would easily be able to handle solitary life in the Alaskan wilderness with no problem. He even rejected the attempts of his counterparts to give him basic supplies, such as food and clothing; he also neglected to get a map, which would have saved his life. Despite his good intentions, Chris’s mistake was huge, and it cost him his life. This must *not* happen to you. You must prepare extensively for this perilous expedition; be confident, but not arrogant. Make sure you have sufficient clothing and food supply, and have a clear plan for how to survive in the wilderness. By all means, you should go on this amazing journey, but I insist you don’t repeat Chris McCandless’s mistakes. Prepare well and do not underestimate the wild, for it holds unseen powers and horrors that only men like McCandless have experienced.

This idea of journeying to the vast wilderness of Alaska to live in solitude is quite possibly the best thought you’ve ever had, my friend. Obviously, many people will strongly oppose this notion due to the extreme risks and dangers associated with the adventure, but that is all the more reason to do it! On this trip, you will be faced with danger, hunger, the rawness of nature, and many other challenges, but I am sure you will overcome these obstacles and continue on with a new and improved life. Take the words of Henry David Thoreau, one of Chris McCandless’s major influences, as inspiration: “[Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/henrydavid145894.html)” With your striking distaste of meaningless civilized life, I know you desire a change, and this adventure is that change. Follow your dreams and instincts, use McCandless and Thoreau for inspiration and guidance, and *go*.

Sincerely,

Zach

Persuasive Essay Sample 2

Dear Belle,

I’ve heard that you have read the book *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer. Good book right? I really liked it, and I heard you did too, so much in fact that you have been inspired by Chris and want to run away and follow your dream of joining a circus. As your friend, I respect your desire to follow your colorful and unconventional dream, but I absolutely cannot let you do this right now. You are a smart, intelligent, and talented person with a lot a head of you. Even Mortica Addams valued college above any aspirations her children had, demonstrated when she said “‘Wednesday's great-aunt Calpurnia. She was burned as a witch in 1706. They said she danced naked in the town square and enslaved the minister.’ ‘Really?’ ‘Oh, yes. But don't worry. We've told Wednesday College first.’” If Wednesday Addams had to go to college before she followed in her inspirational aunt’s footsteps, then you most certainly have to finish high school in the least.

Now I realize I am not your mother, but I know if you told your mother she would not approve of this either. I don’t need to be your mother to tell you that you are throwing away your future and the potential to have a high quality of life. Belle, I know you, and you like being pampered every once and awhile. I can tell you that circus life will not provide this for you at all. I know that you are seeking the close relationships amongst circus families, but you need to live with the friendships and connections you can make here in school for now. You might still feel lonely, but you will be even lonelier if you run away. You might think that running off to the circus will make you happy, but you are very introverted, and one of Chris’s notes that were found stated “HAPPINESS ONLY REAL WHEN SHARED” (129). You will not have to suffer through high school forever, and once you’ve graduated high school, though I’d rather you go to college and find a job you love, if you really want to you can go and fly free to any circus you want, but you need to finish high school first.

Belle, have you even thought about the dangers that Chris’ journey really provided? Have you thought about what if you go and join up with the wrong circus, or if you don’t get the chance to find a circus at all? Let me tell you the world is very dangerous now. More dangerous than it was when Chris hitchhiked up to Alaska twenty years ago. Now, there is much more of a chance for you to get raped, murdered, or kidnapped and sold into sex trafficking. I do not want that to happen to you. You are a beautiful and sweet girl. 1 in 5 women have been sexually assaulted just in the United States alone. That is 20% of women my friend, 20%, that doesn’t even account for murder and kidnappings. Belle, this is way too dangerous for you to do, and I will not let you do this. Chris was a man and men have a smaller chance to get raped and I can bet you that he would have been able to fight off an attacker at the start of his journey. Chris’ family was very concerned for his wellbeing; if you remember their statement, “‘it made us very, very worried’” says a lot about the dangers of the journey (18). Chris was a legal adult out of college, not some wimpy high school girl. You may be talented enough to have a circus act but you are no strong man, you are a fifteen year old girl. If you get assaulted you will not have a chance. You have a huge chance to end up exactly how Chris did at the end of his journey. You do not want that.

If I have not been able to scare you into staying how about you imagine this with me: you find a circus, a beautiful circus, they have gold and red tents, twinkling lights, and you can smell the sweet funnel cakes and popcorn the moment you enter the gates. You see performers with every talent imaginable, contortionists, fire eaters, clowns, illusionists, and fortune tellers just a few steps past the gate. They are an old-timey circus and only travel by train and you love that. It’s the perfect fit for you. They are not too over crowded so you think this is the perfect place to try and showcase whatever talents you can. This feels like serendipity to you after all you’ve been through to get here. You think that you’ll find the ring leader, maybe talk with a manager and then you’ll be a little side feature outside of the tents and move around with them. You look around and find a man with a nice tall hat, he’s welcoming in people to the main event that’s going to start in sometime in the next hour, and you know you will have to be quick. You approach the man and talk him about joining the circus and how you could do that. He tells you that you cannot join because you’re too young. This is actually the third circus you have heard this from, despite most of them having performers that could not be over thirteen. You have no choice but to press on and find a new circus, none will be that perfect and you feel a huge disappointment drop into your stomach, which reminds you that disappointment is the only thing you have had in almost four days. You are forced to internalize the disappointment as Chris so often did, his friends saw the negative effects this had on him, one of his friends noticed how this caused him to “go off alone somewhere and beat himself up” (78). This is what awaits you if you go off all alone. You’ll be stuck in the nearest city as a beggar until you have enough money to make it to a new circus. This is the best case scenario that may wait for you if you decide to runaway. I cannot bring myself to tell you about any worst case scenarios.

Now Belle, I know I cannot make you stay. I cannot make you do anything, but I ask you to stay and finish high school at least. The man you have taken inspiration from at least graduated college before he ran off, and I am not even asking that much from you. I just want you to finish high school. I am only thinking of your well being here. If the circus falls back you can still go and apply to colleges. Krakauer states in his book “they walk away quietly into empty spaces, trying to close the gaps of the past” and this is what you’ll be doing if you still want to run away (22). However if you do not go you are at such a lower risk of being killed or worse, and that is always a good thing. Not to mention, if you have finished the book you would know that Chris, following his dream, starved to death. You know that I am all for you following your dreams, but if Chris has taught us anything, it is that you need to plan ahead at least a little bit before you jump head first into the unknown.

Best wishes,

Persuasive Essay Sample 3

Dear Friend,

I have recently been told that you plan to leave your life behind after High School for a life of adventure and to live outside of the “norms” of society. The purpose of this letter is to point out some of the consequences of this choice and to hopefully convince you to reconsider your decision. As your friend, I feel I am uniquely qualified to know why this is a rash decision and to point out the benefits of weighing the pros and cons before you leave your home in Alpharetta. I would not you to end up hurting your family and friends just as Chris McCandless did in John Krakauer’s work, *Into the Wild.*

On the surface, your adventure may seem like a great idea now but it is important to consider the long term impact of your decision. Much can happen if you decide to leave. As I see it, there are two major negative consequences of your decision. First, leaving your family and friends will cause tremendous heartbreak to those who love you. There is a great example of this in *Into the Wild* when Krauer writes “I have not prayed since we lost him”. This quote from Chris’ mother Billie shows how she has given up hope and how the loss of her son has affected her. Another example from the novel is when Krakauer states “As she studies the pictures, she breaks down from time to time, weeping only as a mother who has outlived a child can weep”. Chris’ leaving caused great sadness and perhaps even depression.

Another negative consequence is the risk involved in the journey due to the way you intend to live. Living outside of society without any form of communication or guaranteed food and shelter in a harsh environment greatly increases the chance of death as this lifestyle leaves you vulnerable to many dangers that exist in the wild. This situation is similar to that in the novel as illustrated by Chris’ letter to a friend that says ‘If this adventure turns fatal and you do not hear from me again”. In this quote McCandless acknowledges the fact that his journey may result in his death. I know that you would not risk your life just to escape Alpharetta and that you would feel a huge sense of loss without your family. This is the primary reason you should not leave.

Yet another reason to not leave your home and give up college is the quality of life you now enjoy here in Alpharetta. If you lived out on your own and outside of society you might find the journey might not live up to your expectations. An example of this in the novel is when Chris thinks he can live by himself but at one point he ends up working for a fast food restaurant to get cash to keep moving. Would you really want to become so desperate to live apart from society when you have so much going for you at home? I do not think you would. By staying here you can continue your education which will lead to a better life. Living in Alpharetta might not fit the life style you want but if you work hard and further your education in college, you allow yourself many different options in life. If you leave it is likely you will not have a clear direction in your life. This would be similar to what Chris writes in his journal “and walks alone upon the land only to become lost in the wild”. If you want to leave a great life and a wonderful education opportunity for a journey that is fine with me, as long as you are willing to accept the consequences that follow this decision.

In the end it will be your choice whether you stay or go on your adventure into the wild but I hope that leaving your loved ones heartbroken, the high risk of death, and lower quality of life will persuade you to stay home with the people who love and care about you more than the nature ever could. I also hope that this letter has showed you the intimacies of relationships are a part of life and not a fabrication of society. I pray that I have done all I can as your friend to help you in making this decision and to show you how important your home is.