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[Subject]

[Date]

**Compare and Contrast**

The story "Me Talk Pretty One Day" was written by David Sedaris. In this book, he discussed his life experiences through twenty-eight short essays. He added humor to the stories as he was humorist and wrote various other collections of humorous essays. In the story, two characters that are Sedaris and Gretchen have so many differences in terms of gender, abilities, talent, and life experience. Sedaris was the author who explained his life experience while Gretchen was his sister. His sister had a different life experience which made her personality extremely different than that of Sedaris. The objective of the essay is to compare and contrast two characters, Sedaris and Gretchen, to analyze the impact of life experience on child development.

In Childhood environment, parents, and siblings play an important role in the cognitive development of the children. Sedaris and Gretchen were six siblings.Among them, Sedaris faced most problems in studying and learning different things while Gretchen was a talented girl who has a number of abilities. The role of parents is really important for children for learning new things. Sedaris found his parents strict towards his activities. Stereotypes were experienced by Sedaris on different stages. Lines are written in the story like “The trouble is that she’s just so darn pretty. That’s the danger right there. Plus, you know, she’s a girl,”and “You don't want to be doing that," the men in our families would say. "That's a girl thing,”(Sedaris)indicates that his parents were overprotective towards gender differences. "He was born a long time ago and was convinced that marriage is a woman’s only real shot at happiness. Because it was always assumed that we would lead professional lives, my brother and Iwere free to grow as plump and ugly as we liked.”(Sedaris)These stereotypes developed the mentality of the parents who later on, taught these things to their children and applied the boundaries based on the gender on them. Sedaris faced issues like the language barrier, confusion in choosing professions, identifying his real talent because he was not ready to accept these stereotypes. However, Gretchen easily learned to respect herparent's decisions. From childhood, she had been taught what are the limits of the girls and she followed these stereotypes. Not only hisparents but Sedaris’s teacher also talked about gender and identified them in a sentence like, “You need to believe you’re playing an actual woman,” in which Sedaris’s guitar teacher telling the students that think guitar like a woman and play with them. This indicates that parents and teachers had a great influence on both children but Sedaris was the one who questioned these stereotypes and tried to find his own way but got confused due to the difference in mentality between him and his parents. However, Gretchen accepted parent’s perception and fulfilled their instructions and wishes.

Every child acquires his own abilities and skills. It is not important that all siblings should have the same choice or skills. Likewise, in the case ofGretchen and Sedaris, both had different tastes but Sedaris faced the problem due to the parent's pressure and teacher's strictness. The main issue was the attention. Sedaris often spent his time thinking about other things during the lesson and felt bored which slowly decreased his attention. For instance, during his guitar class, he used to think that "I’d definitely won my-teacher-is-stranger-than-your competition. Iwondered where Mister Mancini lived and who he might call in case of an emergency. Did he stand on a chair in order to shave, or was his home customized to meet his needs? I’d look at the laundry hamper or beer cooler, thinking that if it came down to it, Mister Mancini could hide just about anywhere. Though I thought of him constantly, I grabbed any excuse to avoided my guitar,”(Sedaris). He tried to learn guitar but soon got bored and irritated and told his father that he will not take any more lessons. His father was disappointed with his decision. On the other hand, Gretchen was given the piano to play. She learned lessons from her father and with so much passion and interest, she’s able to play it melodiously. Father was happy with Gretchen because initially he did not ask her about the choice or whether she wants to play the piano or not. He just assigned her this responsibility which she fulfilled with hard work while Sedaris showed interest in guitar on his own but could not gain hisfather's appreciation. This indicates that both the siblings took lessons related to music field.One played piano and the other, guitar but Gretchen successfully learned piano in her childhood whereas Sedaris had to face so many difficulties. Another skill that both siblings tried to learn was painting and drawing. Both Gretchen and Sedaris spent their time and effort in painting and learning color art. Gretchen had an interest in arts and had a talent of painting and drawing. The family supported her talent and helps her to enhance her abilities by taking a private lesson. Gretchen took classes and improved her painting skills. Her mother defined her skills as an "artistic temperament". Sedaris did not have much interest in painting but he was impressed by her sister. In addition, he saw appreciation of his mother and Gretchen. The main difference between the two was that Gretchen identified her skills and her parents helped her to improve them “When Gretchen’s talent was recognized by teachers, both my parents stepped forward to claim responsibility” (Sedaris). Whereas, Sedaris instead of making his own choice, followed his sister and people around for inspiration which can be identified with his choice when he decided to learn painting after watching his sister “Away from home and the inevitable comparisons with Gretchen, I enrolled as an art major at a college known mainly for its animalhusbandry program. The night before my first life-drawing class, I lay awake worrying that Imight get physically excited by the nude models,”(Sedaris).These lines show that he tried to learn things that other people can do and thought that he can also do this instead of seeking what his passion actually was.

Another major difference between the two was a life experience. Gretchen got the support and care of her parents on each step of her life. Her mother helped her in improving her painting skills while her father taught her piano. This is why she has grown up being a confident girl. On the other hand, Sedaris faced difficulty at home as his parents had a different opinion and thought which brought the conflict in his mind. Secondly, he faced the language barrier which results in slower learning process. His language teacher, as well as guitar teacher, were unable to bring his attention and confidence which made him confused in childhood “In imagining myself as modest, mysterious, and fiercely intelligent, I’m forced to realize that, in real life, I have none of these qualities. Nobody dreams of the things he already has”(Sedaris). The comparison between the two created the actual difficulties, however, later in life, both figure out their responsibilities and passion.

The bottom line is that parents play an important role in child development, both physically and psychologically. Life experiences and teachers also influence child development. Sedaris and Gretchen were siblings that lived in the same environment but due to the different life experiences, their skills, habits, confidence, and behavior were different from each other.

**Work Cited**

Sedaris, David. *Me Talk Pretty One Day*. p. 52.