

Quote Assignment

The video about Robert Looks Twice shows a combination of all of the four characteristics: justice, wisdom, self-mastery, and courage. Robert embodies justice when he wants to become the first Native American President of the U.S. Not only does this show the courage to follow a unique path, or the arduous but educational “muddy road” as he puts it, but it shows the desire to follow a just and prestigious career path to represent an underrepresented and mistreated ethnic group: the Native Americans. As the reporter in the video stressed, the Sioux Native Americans live unhappy lives on an outdated reservation system that stands for the brutal American victory over the Native Americans and their subsequent suppression into small and unkept reservation lands with poor education, many alcoholics, and high levels of suicide. Robert looks to become President presumably because he wants to give a fairer system to the Native American people, because he knows that the reservation life has been neglected by government and can be made better with simple policy changes; this is very brave of him to want to do the right thing, even if it means a hard life of studying and work. The example he provides of being able to provide his grandmother with a house and her favorite foods is an example of that: he wishes to bring justice into her difficult life. There is wisdom in this goal of his, as well as the analogy that he adopted from his uncle about the easy and the muddy road. He does not mention anything about becoming rich or successful, but talks about the hard work necessary to get to the goals he wants. It shows that his moral standards are about his own integrity and perseverance, rather than about financial gain and social manipulation to reach the ends you want; to know this is a wisdom beyond the age of a 12 year-old. Self-mastery is present in his life when he works hard to excel in school, go to college, acquire the politics and other know-how of being a politician, and keep up his cultural heritage at the same time; such a far-spread life shows the discipline and perseverance that he has, which requires a lot of self-mastery. He pursues his goals rather than giving in to the lax life of alcohol and illiteracy that is common in the area that he lives in.

My favorite quote is a quip by Bill Gates: “I will always find a lazy person to do a hard job because a lazy person will find an easy way to do it.” This also connects to the idea of courage— but not in the positive way like Robert sees it. Rather than taking the “muddy road,” Bill Gates takes the “easy road” to achieve the goal of financial success for his company, Microsoft. In the modern world that is ruled by money and the people who have money, this quote provides a practical step to striking it rich. After all, the lazy people *do* indeed do the lazy way, while the scholar might over-complicate and require higher pay. For this reason, Gates’ quote is snarkily satirical, and this hides wisdom in it as well. A wisdom that understands the inherent laziness in human nature.

However, to the teenager, this quote should not apply. Teenagers should look to solve problems with integrity: they should try to use a correct, foolproof, righteous way to achieve a goal. Even if the goal is to win in the corrupt game of business, the brightest, most ingenious minds often make it to the top out of pure intellect. The lowly cheaters always get caught up in their own lies at some point and fall behind. Bill Gates is very experienced and has learned over the years the exact tendencies of his employees, allowing his company to profit, but an impulsive teenager may wreck his fledgling company if he wished to use such shortcuts. Thus it is the necessity of strengthening oneself’s moral basis that is most necessary to the formative education of an adolescent, to which money and success should have a lower priority.