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Toulmin Argument: The Valuable Prom

When I was young, my mom used to tell me that money did not grow on trees. I always responded, “Well, it is made of paper.” She just smiled and mumbled words under her breath. I used to think about what she may have said, but as I got older, I had a clear idea. Money is valued when it is earned, and you learn how to spend it wisely. When my senior year of high school came, I was more excited about prom than anything in the world. In that moment, I believed that the expenses for prom were worth it due to the lifetime memories of my friends, my family and me.

The first reason why I did not mind spending a lot of money for prom at the time was because it was my last year of high school. Actually, it was my last year of any grade school in general. Life seemed as if it was going to shift in a drastic way. With it being senior year, most friends and peers are transitioning from adolescence into adulthood. Some peers move far away, attend universities, start businesses, or start working on their goals in life right away after graduation. It is not promised that we will see someone we graduated from high school with ever again, so I wanted to take advantage of my peers being in the same room while having a good time all at once. As a result of prom, memories play in my head like a catchy song constantly. The bright, flashing lights, glamorous, red carpet, and the fast, camera strobes made prom a night to remember, but my classmates made prom a night to never forget. As I looked around, everyone’s smile lit up the room. They danced like it was the last dance in their lifetime and socialized like they were silenced for days. Joy and laughter filled the room from the entrance

door to the dance floor. Seeing everyone live in the present made me realize why prom was such a big deal to me. No matter what was going to happen in the next chapter of our lives, we made sure that prom was something we could reminisce on in the future.

Second, the influence of my friends' choices reflected my decision making on my prom items. As I spent weeks and months planning on my prom, my friends and I decided to prepare for everything together. I had a general idea on finding a blue, mermaid dress. We went to the mall to shop for our dresses, accessories, heels, nails spas to get our manicures and pedicures done, and hair salons for our new hairstyles. We first stopped at a prom boutique. As we started looking around, I noticed that the simpler dresses and accessories were reasonable. On the other hand, the glam section was very pricy. My friends walked past the basic dresses like they never saw them in the store. They were into sparkly, glittery dresses with long trains hitting five inches to the floor. In addition, the jewelry was sparkly blinding, and the shoes created a mirror reflection on the floor. The more that I stared at the startling items, I more I began to fall in love. I brought a red, silky dress that detailed with gold applique fabric on the shoulders, stomach, and back of my dress. The dress was a ball gown cut, and my dress was long enough to step on. The dress priced at \$500 by itself. Even though it was a lot of money, my friends and I bonded in a very special way. Everyone started to figure out each other's personalities based on what we were trying on and disliked. It was a bond that I will never forget.

A final reason on why I spent a lot of money on my prom was because prom meant a lot to my family. With my sister and me being the last girls in our family to graduate at that moment, they never knew if they would have another opportunity to participate in any other proms. Taking that into consideration, my family became more involved with the event. Furthermore, my parents' goal was to make prom perfect to us and not to anyone else. They wanted to see us happy and to enjoy prom because if we were happy, then they were happy. We

had several discussions about what we wanted, when we were going to get our dresses, shoes, and accessories, and the prices of the attire. I told them that my approximate expenses were going to be about \$900, and I was going to shop with my sister and a group of friends. Even though I was not working at that time, I earned the money by doing chores, dog sitting, and babysitting several months beforehand. They were a little shocked when they heard my price range, but since I was willing to work for what I wanted, they did not say much about it.

Although I was earning money for the event, they decided to give me \$200. I am very grateful to have parents that support and help me through every step of the way.

However, while my parents accepted the expenses for my prom, my grandma thought I was bizarre. Senior year is a quick transition from being a teenager and moving into adulthood, and she said that \$900 was too much for one night, and I could be spending it on something more valuable like a phone bill or save the money for a rainy day. Even though according to a survey from *The Guardian*, “the average US family plans to spend about \$919 on a prom-going teen” (Kasperkevic), she still tried to convince me to change my mind, but I refused. I knew that I was going to make a lot of memories, and I wanted to have the “perfect” memory of my prom. When we wear something that makes us feel confident, we behave in a more confident way. I did not want to have a dreadful prom experience. As bratty as this sounds, I was either going to buy whatever I wanted to wear, or I was not going. Prom meant a lot to me back then, so I did not care about how much money I was spending. With that being said, I am glad that I stuck with my decision. Instead of being self-conscious about how I looked, I was enjoying myself and my friends. I took lots of pictures and danced carelessly throughout the night.

In one part of a teenager’s life, memories are going to be important to them than expenses will ever be. Throughout my whole life, I realized that money comes and goes, but memories stay forever. Life is very short, so you should live in the present and have as much fun as you

can. Prom was a very special event for me because it felt like the end of a new beginning. In addition, it showed how one night can unite friends and peers in a positive way. Even though I spent an excessive amount of money for prom, it is a night I will never forget.

Work Cited

Kasperkevic, Jana. "Prom Night Can Cost Teenagers (and Parents) a Pretty Penny." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 20 April 2015, www.theguardian.com/money/2015/apr/20/prom-night-cost-teenagers-parents-pretty-penny. Accessed 5 April 2020.