

Melissa Clemenhausen

Dr. Hepworth

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Dale Vs. Robert: A Comparison and Contrast Essay

Dale is a forty year old man. Robert is forty-eight. Dale lives in a trailer house, a home that he has remodeled, located six miles outside of Kendrick, Idaho. Robert lives on main street in Kendrick, Idaho. Robert suffers form kidney failure. He lives with his parents. His mom helps care for him.

Dale is employed as a welder. He leaves for work at 4:30 a.m. each morning. Sometimes it is nearly ten o'clock at night before he comes home. Robert has a carefree schedule. He is a night owl. He takes cat naps throughout the day. Three times a week he drives to Clarkston, Washington, for dialysis. After dialysis, it is common for him to sleep all afternoon.

Dale has a dark mustache and beard. He keeps his dark brown hair cut shorter in the summer. One year he shaved both his head and his face. His wife was furious! She stormed around the house for days. The only time she spoke to Dale was to tell him she was angry. Dale decided that he would never again shave his face. Robert has a beard and mustache. His hair is long year round. Grey is beginning to take over his once dark brown mane. He blames his grey hair on his youngest daughter: "It was the stress of raising her," Robert says with a huge grin.

Dale doesn't smile very often. Dale is angry most of the time. The only time he

Seems to be in a good mood is when he is out drinking. Every weekend, Dale and his wife go to karaoke at The Antelope Inn or The Bottoms Up. When Dale goes out he wears a western style, long sleeve, button up shirt, a brown cowboy hat, and a pair of black cowboy boots. Any day of the week you will see Robert in a pair of sweat pants. The left leg of his pants is cut into shorts. (A few years ago he had his left leg amputated just above the knee. It is easier for Robert to just cut the pants short rather than fold them.) He wears v-necked shirts with a pocket on the chest.

Robert always has a lighter and a pack of cigarettes in his pocket. He smokes Pall Mall full flavored cigarettes in a hard pack. Dale also smokes. He smokes full flavored Dorals from a soft pack.

Robert likes to drink rum and coke. He shouldn't drink a lot of fluid because he doesn't have kidneys. Kidneys filter the toxins out of your body. (That is why we urinate.) The doctor told Robert once, "If you are going to drink, just drink hard alcohol. You won't have to drink as much to get hammered." Dale drinks Keystone Light in a can. Sometimes Dale tries tequila, but that usually ruins the night for everyone else. He becomes belligerent.

Dale expects his wife to have dinner waiting for him when he comes home from work. He has potatoes, usually mashed; vegetables, either corn, green beans, or cooked broccoli; meat—almost always elk or deer—. Hamburger and other store brought meat is too expensive. Robert has unusual eating habits. Sometimes he eats a cheeseburger for breakfast, lunch, *and* dinner. For two years, Robert was addicted to caramel apple suckers. He hates garlic and onions. He swears that he'll have heart burn for days if he eats them.

Dale and Robert both enjoy singing at karaoke. Dale sings some Garth Brooks and Hank Williams Jr. tunes, while Robert sings Alan Jackson, Toby Keith, and Kid Rock.

Robert has both ears pierced, twice. For about two months he wore a goatee. He looked like a punk rocker/hippy. Dale has had his ear pierced once. Occasionally he will wear a plain stud or a cross. Most of the time he doesn't wear an earring at all.

Dale is an avid hunter. In the fall he takes opening day of hunting season and the week following off work. This is the only time that Dale misses work. He won't even ask for a day off work to go to the doctor. Dale hunts for deer, elk, and bear, and once he hunted for moose. Dale enjoys fishing, but hunting is his life. Dale decorates his living room with mounted elk and deer heads, as well as dropped horns that he has found over the last twenty five years.

Twenty years ago, when Dale's daughter was about three years old, she tripped over a chair and fell on one of the mounted elk heads. The antler went through her neck. She was lucky: the antler barely missed her jugular. She came home with fourteen stitches. The accident didn't affect her speech, that's for sure. She can still talk about a million words per minute.

Dale doesn't really like pets. He gets angry when his daughter sneaks the dogs into the house at night. Once Dale's wife had a calico cat. The cat was hungry. It followed Dale around the kitchen meowing. It didn't take long before Dale got irritated. Dale grabbed his rifle, opened the kitchen window, threw the cat out, and then shot the cat in the head. His daughter's dog liked to chase and kill chickens. He tied a dead chicken to the dog's neck, thinking that the dog would learn his lesson. Actually the dog decided to kill more chickens, so Dale shot the dog too. Robert, on the other hand, has a

Siamese cat name Frank. Frank's front claws have been removed. Frank loves to cuddle. Frank also enjoys getting stoned.

Dale has three sons and two daughters. His youngest son, who is sixteen, just had a daughter. Dale's oldest daughter is pregnant now. She is nineteen. Dale keeps a close eye on his younger daughter, who is thirteen. After the surprise grand child (whose mother is also thirteen), he has realized that he needs to be more attentive. Robert had eight grand children. He is a proud grandfather. Two of his grandsons have the middle name 'Robert.'

Robert has been divorced twice. His three children--Robert, Aaron, and Vennessa--were born to his first wife, Wendy. His second wife, Barbara, had a son of her own named David. Then she became pregnant with their youngest daughter, Melissa.

Dale has five children: Robert, Aaron, Vennessa, David, and Melissa.

I suppose that right now you may be confused. Robert and Dale are actually the same person at different times of his life. Robert is my father's first name. Dale is my father's middle name. When I refer to 'Robert', I am speaking of my father in present time. When I refer to Dale I am speaking about my father during the time period before he had a stroke.

You see, when I was a baby, my father was diagnosed with kidney disease. My father was on dialysis for approximately two years. He then received a kidney transplant. Growing up, my dad was not home much. It seemed like he was always at work, or out hunting or drinking.

When he found out in late 1990's that his kidneys were failing again, he became very bitter. Our family went through hell with his disease. As my dad's health began to

fail, so did my mom's. The stress created insoluble devastating problems between them. They struggled financially and emotionally, but neither of them were well enough to go to work. The only thing that they could agree on was that they love each other but needed to be separate.

On Christmas Eve, 1999, Dale moved in with his mother. Previously he had surgery on his left leg to increase blood flow. Unfortunately, the incision had become infected. Doctor Ozeran feared that the infection would spread through his body and become fatal. By the beginning of the new year, Dale's leg had been amputated.

When I was sixteen my dad also suffered a series of strokes and then a heart attack. He had spent two days in ICU, on life support before anyone bothered to get a hold of me. When I saw him lying in a coma, not even able to breathe on his own, I was angry. I was angry that no one had told me. I was angry that my parent had both left me. I was angry that they had gotten a divorce. And I was angry that I was about to lose my father.

I sat with him for a week. His face was covered in residue from the mineral in his body and dry saliva. His body seemed to raise off of the bed with every force of air from the ventilator. His body would become extremely tense. His muscles would then go into spasms. I'm not if he heard a word I said. As I laid my hand on his chest, I begged in a hushed voice for him to try to stay still. I told him good-bye. I said that it was okay to go.

Eventually, I became furious that the doctors and my family were letting him lay there on life support. I thought to myself "He wouldn't want to be on life support!" I was ready for him to die. I had accepted his death. I expected him to die.

He was in the coma for two weeks. When he woke up in Sacred Heart Hospital, in Spokane Washington, he didn't remember much. He had forgotten, for instance, that he had been divorced from my mom. My father remembered me being about thirteen years old but I was actually sixteen. He remembered my niece, Sagen, as about ten months old. She was actually three. When he saw her for the first time after he came out of the coma, he looked at her curiously. A few minutes later he said, "You're a lot bigger than I remember."

After nearly losing his life, my father learned to love unconditionally. He has since learned to smile and to live. We say, "I love you" every time we talk. We never know if we will have another chance to say good-bye.