Personal Narrative Essay Model

**Promises Are Not Meant to Be Broken**

My heart leaped with excitement! My hero (a.k.a.my dad) was taking care of my older brothers and me. At the very least, this meant chocolate marshmallow ice-cream cones and maybe even the privilege of staying up past 8:00 P.M. Clean, polished, and properly p.j.’d, I plastered my charming five-year-old smile on my face and politely begged to watch Wagon Train, a show that ended at 9:00, with my brothers. To my great delight Dad caved in but made me promise to go to bed at 8:30.Happily I crossed my heart and pledged to do as I was told. Little did I know that later I would face a decision that would fill me with doubt, cause me to disobey my dad, and lead me to suffer the unhappy consequences.

Along with The Lone Ranger, Wagon Train promised to become one of my favourite television shows. Filled with western frontier action, the trials and tribulations of America’s early pioneers kept me and my siblings on the edge of our seats. Right in the middle of a dramatic showdown, my oldest brother told me it was 8:30, time for me to go to bed. Although a small voice whispered, “Remember what you promised Dad,” a louder voice shouted, “Hide somewhere so you can see whether Cookie gets scalped!” Back and forth, up and down my conscience seesawed. Doubt clung to me like a wide strip of Velcro.

“Bang!” The battle against the Indians began, and I was hooked. Pretending to head toward bed, I stealthily crept behind the stairwell wall. From there I had a clear view of the television, yet no one in the living room could see me. Propped up against the wall with my teddy bear in hand, I made my fateful decision: I would watch the rest of the show.

Totally enthralled by the action, I failed to see my dad enter the living room and head toward the stairs. Before I could zip into my room, Dad, red-faced and angry, appeared at the bottom of the steps. With a quivering voice he declared, “Sue, you must never, ever break a promise. I counted on you to keep your word.”Immediately the tears welled up and trickled down my cheeks. I had disappointed my hero, and, even worse, I had disappointed my best moral self. Slowly my father continued, “I think an appropriate punishment would be to go without watching TV for an entire week. And that means no Wagon Train!” In the end, the prospect of not seeing any of my favourite shows did not bother me nearly as much as the thought of letting down my dear old dad.

When I was just five I learned a valuable lesson from an extraordinary teacher: my dad. After disobeying him one night and suffering the natural consequences of my actions, I realized how important it is to keep a promise. To this day if I promise to do something, you can bet your bottom dollar that I will do it.

Sample Five-Paragraph Narrative Essay

**Learning Swimming**

Learning something new can be a scary experience. One of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do was learn how to swim. I was always afraid of the water, but I decided that swimming was an important skill that I should learn. I also thought it would be good exercise and help me to become physically stronger. What I didn’t realize was that learning to swim would also make me a more confident person.

New situations always make me a bit nervous, and my first swimming lesson was no exception. After I changed into my bathing suit in the locker room, I stood timidly by the side of the pool waiting for the teacher and other students to show up. After a couple of minutes the teacher came over. She smiled and introduced herself, and two more students joined us. Although they were both older than me, they didn’t seem to be embarrassed about not knowing how to swim. I began to feel more at ease.

We got into the pool, and the teacher had us put on brightly colored water wings to help us stay afloat. One of the other students, May, had already taken the beginning class once before, so she took a kickboard and went splashing off by herself. The other student, Jerry, and I were told to hold on to the side of the pool and shown how to kick for the breaststroke. One by one, the teacher had us hold on to a kickboard while she pulled it through the water and we kicked. Pretty soon Jerry was off doing this by himself, travelling at a fast clip across the short end of the pool.

Things were not quite that easy for me, but the teacher was very patient. After a few more weeks, when I seemed to have caught on with my legs, she taught me the arm strokes. Now I had two things to concentrate on, my arms and my legs. I felt hopelessly uncoordinated. Sooner than I imagined, however, things began to feel “right” and I was able to swim. It was a wonderful feeling - like flying, maybe - to be able to shoot across the water.

Learning to swim was not easy for me, but in the end my persistence paid off. Not only did I learn how to swim and to conquer my fear of the water, but I also learned something about learning. Now when I am faced with a new situation I am not so nervous. I may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but I know that as I practice being in that situation and as my skills get better, I will feel more and more comfortable. It is a wonderful, free feeling when you achieve a goal you have set for yourself.