

Autobiographical Incident Example

Annie

"Happy Birthday, Maria," my parents said as they handed me a large box.

It was my eighth birthday, and I had given my parents a long list of things I wanted—a new video game, a catcher's mitt, roller skates. This box, though, was too big for a game or a mitt and not heavy enough for skates. Besides that, the box was moving! I tore off the top, and then I saw it—a small, brown puppy! I picked her up and held her in my arms. She wriggled with excitement, licking my face over and over with her rough tongue.

Annie wasn't the smartest dog in the world. When she was about three months old, I tried teaching her some simple tricks.

"Sit, Annie! Sit!" I would say sternly, pushing her bottom to the floor and walking away. For a few seconds she sat, her tail thumping the floor in excitement with this new game. It was too much for her, though. Annie couldn't imagine that I would want to be away from her. Barking happily, she bounded across the room toward me. Annie and I became best friends. She had her own wicker basket, but she always slept on the foot of my bed. Every morning, when it was time for her to go out, she jumped on my pillow, her wet nose nuzzling my ear. In the afternoon when I came home from school, Annie was always at the door to meet me. She seemed to sense when it was time for the school bus to arrive.

One day, when I was twelve years old, I overslept. I had only twenty minutes to dress and get to the bus stop. I asked my mother if she would please feed Annie, and I rushed out of the yard. When I came home that afternoon, I saw the sober look on my mother's face.

"Annie's gone, Maria," my mother said sadly. "You left the gate open this morning, and she ran out of the yard."

The worst thing that could have happened to me had just happened. I had lost my best friend. For the next three months, my parents and I did everything we could do to find Annie. We went from door to door in the neighborhood asking about her. My friends helped me make posters describing Annie and telling about a reward. We even put an ad in the newspaper, but there were no calls.

Then, one day, the phone rang. "Hello, my name is Mrs. Peterson. I just saw a poster advertising a lost dog, and I think we have it!"

My heart pounded, and I could barely get the words out as I asked where I could come to get Annie. Mrs. Peterson lived only four blocks away, and I raced over there on my bike.

I ran up the stairs and rang the bell. "Hi, I'm Maria Lopez. I talked to you about my dog."

"Come in, Maria," Mrs. Peterson said, inviting me into a small, dark living room. Sitting in a corner was a little boy, about six years old, clutching Annie. Annie looked at him with the same adoring gaze that I had seen so often. The boy was crying.

"Now, Derek, you know that we talked about this. The dog belongs to this girl, and you have to give her back." The boy cried harder, and Annie licked the tears off his face. "I'm sorry, Maria," Mrs. Peterson said. "Derek lost his dad last year, and this is the first time since then he's gotten attached to anything."

I gulped and thought for a long time. "No, Mrs. Peterson, that's not my dog. I'm sorry."

I've spent my allowance on presents for people before. I've even given small donations for worthy causes. This is the first time, though, that I've ever given of myself. Sometimes, I learned, giving hurts a lot.