

## Intro Samples

### Discussion/Quote

So many people accept their miserable lives and do absolutely nothing to change them (qtd. in Krakauer 53). They drown in misery, instead of pursue their dreams; they “just get old” instead of getting what they want (qtd. in “Quotes About”). But what if the world could admire and aspire to become someone else — someone who pursues his dreams, challenges himself, and takes risks? Chris McCandless, an intelligent, brave young man, embarked on a life-changing adventure to Alaska, so he could find himself and his place in the world. He is a true hero, a person everyone — young and old — should emulate, despite how the cynics of the world have characterized him: he unwaveringly pursued his admirable dream, achieved his goal, and inspired so many people around him.

## **Brief Anecdote**

Walt McCandless wanted to know where his son was going and what he was going to do. Chris McCandless tried to explain to his father that he did not have a plan — the trip was to be a spontaneous adventure. Feeling like he was losing control, Chris' father lunged at Chris and punched him in the back. Chris — being a strong and brave person — looked at his father and walked away (McCandless). **Lead into a discussion about Chris and how he is inspiring.**

## **Background Information/Establishing the Controversy**

In 1992 Chris McCandless, a 23-year-old pseudo-Transcendentalist, embarked on an Alaskan adventure in order to discover truth, purpose, and meaning regarding life. He abandoned his car, donated \$25,000 to charity, and cut off all ties with his family in order to live the life he felt he was

destined to live. Many, such as Jon Krakauer, author of *Into the Wild*, revere McCandless for his courage, determination and idealistic philosophy. However, Alaskans in particular condemned him and categorized him as a “kook” who was “purposefully ill-prepared” (qtd. in Krakauer 71). Despite Krakauer’s attempt to accurately examine and clarify “the particulars of the boy’s starvation” (Author’s Note), in doing so he unjustifiably glorifies McCandless in a rather provocative way, where McCandless perhaps receives more credit than he deserves. Chris McCandless, although he follows his dreams and *may* have discovered an invaluable truth regarding life, was a “freeloader” (Medred), an unforgiving boy whose self-centered philosophy and “rigorous moral code” (Krakauer 122) rendered the people around him utterly miserable.

## Quote

“Two years he walks the Earth. No phone, no pool, no pets, no cigarettes. Ultimate freedom. An extremist. An aesthetic voyager whose home is the road” (qtd. in Krakauer 125). In 1992 Chris McCandless -- nomad, pilgrim, adventurer -- carved this “declaration of independence” “on a sheet of weathered plywood” (Krakauer 125). He had found what he was looking for: truth, purpose, and happiness. Although McCandless would never return to civilization to tell his story, he left behind a message and philosophy that inspired people around the country. Many cynics, such as Craig Medred, Alaskan journalist, unfairly criticized Chris for being unprepared and ignorant. However, they clearly do not understand Chris McCandless and the benevolent person he was. He is a truly inspiring young man who should be remembered for his compassion and bravery.