Character Sketch Assignment

For this assignment, you are asked to write a personality profile of someone you know or have encountered first hand. It does not have to be someone you know well (although it certainly can be), but it should be someone with whom you have personal experience.

These pieces are also called “character sketches,” and that may be an easier way to think of them. It’s a sketch of someone—a narrow and specific glimpse of who they are—not a comprehensive report of the subject’s life. Remember these two things:

1. Show; don’t tell.
2. It’s always better to say more about less than less about more.

*Don’t tell your audience what your character’s personality is like; tell a story that reveals your character’s personality.

Basic Elements of a Character Sketch*

- **Lead anecdote.**
  - Try to use a story that best exemplifies the individual's personality or character. This should represent what distinguishes this person from others.
  - You may consider writing about the person in an interesting setting: workplace or other.
  - Be descriptive. Show, don't tell.
- **Wart.**
  - Not everyone is perfect and if your story sounds like a promotional piece it is time to introduce a wart.
  - The wart simply reflects the subject's shortcomings, usually in a benign manner.
  - Warts can also address more grave considerations, such as issues with addiction, health, failures (personally and professionally).
- **Close anecdote or quote.**
  - Your closing should neatly conclude your story with either an appropriate quote or anecdote.
  - There should be a theme or focus of your story by now and this should serve as a reinforcement.
  - Perhaps this will reference the lead anecdote to tie the story together.