Is Willy Loman a tragic hero? Investigating quotations from Act One

1. Look through the following quotations and decide if, how, and in what ways you could use these to either support of dispute the idea that Willy Loman is a modern day tragic hero:

	Willy: I'm tired to the death … I couldn't make
Willy: …I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England.	
	Willy: Figure it out. Work a lifetime on a house. You finally own it, and there's nobody to live in it.
Willy: Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such – personal attractiveness, gets lost.	
	Biff: … And now, I get home and I don't know what to do with myself … I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life.
Happy: …See, Biff, everybody around me is so false that I'm constantly lowering my ideals …	
	Biff: That selfish, crude …
Willy: … Never leave a job till you're finished – remember that.	
	Biff: Well, I borrowed it from the locker room … Willy (*laughing with him at the theft*) I want you to return that.
Willy: Well I got on the road , and I … Met the Mayor. … He was sitting in the hotel lobby.	
	Willy: That's why I thank Almighty God you're both built like Adonises. Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never ant. You take me, for instance. I never have to wait in line to see a buyer. 'Willy Loman is here!' That's all they have to know, and I go right through.

1. Rank the quotations – those that would provide the strongest evidence that Willy Loman is a tragic hero – those that would provide the weakest.
2. Using the one that you think is the strongest and the one that you think is the weakest prepare a discursive presentation on Willy Loman as tragic hero.
3. From Act One pick out four more quotations: two which support the idea of Loman as tragic hero and two which dispute the idea.
4. Swap your choices of quotations with someone else in your class and then prepare another discursive presentation using their choices, even if you don't agree with them.

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