

## ***Book Review: The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch***

***“Time is all you have. And you may find one day that you have less time than you think.” Randy Pausch. – excerpt from the book The Last Lecture.***

As the background goes, each year at a series known as The Last Lecture, a Carnegie Mellon University faculty member is asked to deliver what would hypothetically be a final speech to their students before dying. It is a wonderful tradition in which both the speaker and listeners take a moment to reflect upon what matters most in this life. In September 2007, the speaker, 47-year-old computer science professor and father of three, Randy Pausch, didn't have to imagine that he was confronting his imminent demise because, in fact, he was. Pausch had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and, at the time of his Last Lecture, had only been given three to six months to live. Pausch's speech, entitled "Achieving Your Childhood Dreams," is every bit as upbeat and inspirational as the man himself. Rather than focusing on dying, it was a speech about living, about achieving one's dreams and enabling the dreams of others, about truly living each day as though it were your last.

One of the themes of Randy's speech later compiled into a book is dreams coming true. He talks about the dreams he had as a young boy, and how some of them happened and some of them did not. The principles he learned along the way. Also his believe that "life's brick walls are there to show us how badly we really want something," the notion that "experience is what you get when you didn't get what you wanted," and a quotation from the Roman philosopher Seneca who said that "luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." These words, their meaning made me numb! It left me wandering and emotional as - I can't really remember what I dreamed of growing up to be when I was six years old!

It is a book that will make you think about what you want most out of life - your job, your family, your marriage. It will make you wonder what you would choose to spend your time on if you were told you only had six months to live. Would you ever show up at work again? What would you tell your family? How would you create their last memories of you? What childhood dreams would suddenly come bubbling to the top of your priority list after having been ignored since your age first became double digits. It's impossible to read this book and not ask these questions.

Pausch is a fantastic storyteller, and recalls and distills the essentials of his life's anecdotes more than most of us would be able. It is heart-breaking and heart-warming, and forces a re-evaluation of everything you ever thought was important. For me, it sharpened my desire to do more with my life, to live it more for my dreams that I had once dreamed and wanted to achieve. It made me contemplate the real value of my life, it made me sit back and think about what is more important in my life and how I want to live my life so that when I turn forty-five I will be able to look back on the third of my adult life and repent milestones which I could have achieved!

