

# ***The Last Lecture of a dying man***

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**By Dave Havir**

BIG SANDY, Texas—Mac Overton is a friend of mine who recently learned that he has pancreatic cancer. While we want to help him in his time of trial, he has been helping many of us with his example of having a positive perspective.

Let me give you an example of Mac's kindness. He recently gave me a book titled *The Last Lecture*, by Randy Pausch. Many of you had probably heard about it since it was highly publicized after its printing in 2008. But I had never heard of it until Mac gave the book to me.

What makes the circumstance so remarkable to me is that the author (Randy Pausch) wrote the book while dealing with his final months of pancreatic cancer.

Since Mac has pancreatic cancer, I'm sure that Mac is finding the book to be helpful to him as he goes through his health trial. Even though I am not diagnosed with any serious disease, I found the book to also be helpful to me.

## **About the author**

Randy Pausch was a professor of computer science, human-computer interaction and design at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pa. Previously, from 1988 to 1997, he taught at the University of Virginia.

He was acclaimed as an award-winning teacher and researcher who worked with Adobe, Google, Electronic Arts (EA) and Walt Disney Imagineering. He was credited with pioneering the Alice Project.

## **Inside the cover**

Here is what the publishers wrote inside the cover of his book.

"A lot of professors give talks titled 'The Last Lecture.' Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy?"

“When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn’t have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave—‘Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams’—wasn’t about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because ‘time is all you have . . . and you may find one day that you have less than you think’). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about *living*.”

### **Outline of book**

Here is an outline of the book.

#### ***Section I—The Last Lecture***

1. An Injured Lion Still Wants to Roar
2. My Life in a Laptop
3. The Elephant in the Room

#### ***Section II—Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams***

4. The Parent Lottery
5. The Elevator in the Ranch House
6. Getting to Zero G
7. I Never Made it to the NFL
8. You’ll Find Me Under “V”
9. A Skill Set Called Leadership
10. Winning Big
11. The Happiest Place on Earth

#### ***Section III—Adventures and Lessons Learned***

12. The Park is Open Until 8 p.m.
13. The Man in the Convertible
14. The Dutch Uncle
15. Pouring Soda in the Backseat
16. Romancing the Brick Wall
17. Not All Fairy Tales End Smoothly
18. Lucy, I’m Home
19. A New Year’s Story
20. “In Fifty Years, It Never Came Up”

21. Jai
22. The Truth Can Set You Free

### ***Section IV—Enabling the Dreams of Others***

23. I'm on My Honeymoon, But If You Need Me . . .
24. A Recovering Jerk
25. Training a Jedi
26. They Just Blew Me Away
27. The Promised Land

### ***Section V—It's About How to Live Your Life***

28. Dream Big
29. Earnest Is Better Than Hip
30. Raising the White Flag
31. Let's Make a Deal
32. Don't Complain, Just Work Harder
33. Treat the Disease, Not the Symptom
34. Don't Obsess Over What People Think
35. Start By Sitting Together
36. Look for the Best in Everybody
37. Watch What They Do, Not What They Say
38. If At First You Don't Succeed . . .
39. Be the First Penguin
40. Get People's Attention
41. The Lost Art of Thank-You Notes
42. Loyalty Is a Two-Way Street
43. The Friday Night Solution
44. Show Gratitude
45. Send Out Thin Mints
46. All You Have Is What You Bring With You
47. A Bad Apology Is Worse Than No Apology
48. Tell the Truth

49. Get in Touch with Your Crayon Box
50. The \$100,000 Salt and Pepper Shaker
51. No Job Is Beneath You
52. Know Where You Are
53. Never Give Up
54. Be a Communitarian
55. All You Have to Do Is Ask
56. Make a Decision: Tigger or Eeyore
57. A Way to Understand Optimism
58. The Input of Others

### ***Section VI—Final Remarks***

59. Dreams for My Children
60. Jai and Me
61. The Dreams Will Come to You

### **An emotional reaction**

One of the beautiful things about life is that we have different personality types. Our emotional makeup is different.

Allow me to give you a warning. If you are the type of person who has an emotional reaction of tears to a heartfelt story, the message in Randy's final remarks may bring on some tears.

Whether your personality type brings tears or not, I believe that the story of Randy Pausch may touch your heart.

I even suspect that his story may help you to reflect upon your life and how you influence the people around you.