

### **Lessons from a Dying Man**

A rare, inspiring, truly authentic and wise man died on July 27<sup>th</sup> of cancer, Randy Pausch at the age of 47. Some of you may have read his book, *The Last Lecture* or viewed some of the lecture on TV. I am a huge, huge fan of his. I listened to his book, narrated by him, while on a trip to Washington DC in April and he made a tremendous difference in my life and has done the same for so many others. He is the rarest of individuals who offered the world a gift; his wisdom about living life. He imparted this as he was dying; wanting to share over 60 lessons to his 3 children what he would have taught them had he continued to live to raise them. These lessons offer all of us guidance on how to lead a fulfilling and rich life.

After learning of his death I decided to re-listen to the audio book and share with you some of his lessons. I hope you will read or listen to his book as I am confident it will make a difference in your life as well.

**If you dream it you can do it. Visualize it, visit it, and see it.** Randy dreamed BIG dreams. In 1969 he visited Disneyland and dreamed of making things with his imagination similar to the likes of Disney. He dreamed of working at Disney when he was a child, later wrote to Disney to offer his talent yet did not receive a response. When he moved to CA his first visit was to Disney's Imaginarium. In Finally, after some persistence in 1995, as Professor at UVA he led the development of a Virtual Reality System. He was able to get the attention of Disney Imaginarium. He was chosen to participate on their team and it was unheard of for an academic to be invited. He had walked through many hoops to get this opportunity.

Fascinated by the World Book Encyclopedia as a child – he dreamt of being a contributor and waited all his life for the call. Apparently, with the World Book you have to wait to be called rather than offer yourself to them. He was called as an expert on Virtual Reality.

Randy dreamt of floating in space. Through his work with Carnegie Mellon (CM) he and his team of students were invited to Johnson Space Center to float in space.

*Randy wants all of us to dream; stretch to new heights, reach our potential which he sees as unlimited! What do you dream of and how will you get there? Create a vision board with pictures and words that reflect your dream.*

**We cannot change the cards we are dealt, we can only change how we deal with it.** Randy approached his pancreatic cancer treatment like the researcher he was. He studied and analyzed his cancer, treatment, and options. He brought in colleagues and friends to assist him with his study. This empowered him at a time he could have felt powerless. Through this approach, Randy was among few who took part in a new treatment and later had no more pancreatic cancer as a result. However, with more tests he learned it had metastasized to his liver.

*What strengths and skills do you have and can bring to realizing your goals, challenges and dreams? What can you be accessing more of and create opportunities?*

**Be a Tigger or an Euyore.** When told the cancer had metastasized he still felt it was great to be alive. "I'm dying and I'm having fun and I am going to have fun every day because there is no other way to play it." Each of us must decide either to be a fun loving Tigger or a sad sappy Euyore". Randy continued to live his life to the fullest. He went on a scuba diving vacation with friends from different times of his life and despite their awareness of his cancer it was not discussed on this vacation. He chose to pack fun into any time he had left.

*Are you a Tigger or an Euyore? You can choose!*

**You've got to get the fundamentals down otherwise the fancy stuff won't work.** He valued the ability to endure adversity, perseverance, and hard work which he experienced in his life often. He shared about an especially challenging coach who rode his players hard, told them when they screwed up and made them work harder to be better. Randy said, "Your critics are the ones who care about you and want better for you."

*How are you going to challenge yourself to realize your most important goals and dreams? Who can keep you on track, focused, encourage your efforts and inspire you to reach higher?*

**Let the little things go.** Randy and his wife, Jay decided not to let the small things slip them up. Like most couples they had argued about the small stuff like

leaving the clothes on the floor. Jay wrote the little things in a journal so she could let them go.

*Where are you getting bogged down by the small stuff? Where are we placing negative energy? Find an outlet or a ritual you can do to let go of this energy.*

**Time is finite and must be explicitly managed like money.** Randy chose not to invest time on irrelevant details. He was a believer in having a plan, to do lists, breaking down tasks, organizational systems, using his time valuably, avoiding time-wasters and delegating. He was successful and lived a rich life in part because he knew how to maximize each moment.

*What are your time-wasters? What can you start to say “no” to in order to free up your time? Refer to my archived newsletters to learn more about setting goals, planning and time management.*

**Find your own path to fulfillment.** Randy wanted his children to find their own joy. he did not want them to consider what they think he might want them to pursue. he wanted them to figure it out their way, what brings them enthusiasm and passion. “I am there with them with anything they choose.”

*Are you living out someone else’s dreams of goals? What brings you joy, what you are passionate about? Remove the “should”.*

Here are just a few more of his lessons I want to mention. His book has many more.

**People are more important than things.**

**Brick walls are there for a reason- they teach you how badly you want something.**

**Tell the truth all the time.**

**Live with the dents and scrapes.**

**No matter how bad things are you  
can always make them worse.**

**Look for the best in people.**

**Bad apology is worst then no apology at all.**

**Show gratitude and paying it forward.**

**Stand behind each other.**

**Just ask.**

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