



REFLECTIONS

July 28, 2024, Adapted from the Archives of August 3, 2008

**May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;
establish the work of our hands for us —yes,
establish the work of our hands.**

Psalm 90:17

Last Lecture

“I’ll always remember what you told me...”

Nick’s words stopped me in my tracks. I had no recollection of offering him any life-changing wisdom, but I learned that day how words spoken in the course of an ordinary day can impact those around us.

When Randy Pausch took the podium, he probably hoped his message would impact more than a few lives. Though a little-known college professor, he was an excellent teacher—extraordinary perhaps—but still of little renown except to his students, colleagues, and a few others. On this occasion Randy had accepted an invitation to participate in a tradition known as the “Last Lecture.” These programs, common to many schools, offered opportunities to pass along the life lessons one would choose to share as if it were their last lecture. For Randy this one *would* be his.

Randy took the stage holding a deep secret in his heart. Even those in the audience who knew him were unaware of his terminal illness until he said: “When there is an elephant in the room, introduce it.” But Randy had not come with a message about dying.

“We cannot control the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand.” And his lecture followed, listing one principle for living after another until he summed it: “[This lecture] has not been about how to achieve your dreams. It’s about how to lead your life.”

Few of us have a stage set for our last lecture as Randy Pausch had. And most of us will not influence the lives of millions of people with a single lecture the way he may have. But each of us delivers a piece of our last lecture through the way we lead our lives each and every day.

And who knows, perhaps one day someone will stop you in your tracks and say, “I’ll never forget what you told me...” And what you said likely won’t have been on a stage set for a last lecture for many to hear.

Rather, your influences may be hidden in the simplicity of ordinary days in your life.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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