

Who is Randy Pausch and What Was He Known For?

Randy Pausch was a professor in the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon. In late 2006, he was given a terminal diagnosis of pancreatic cancer: doctors said he had 3-6 months of good health left to live. He is most well-known for his final lecture 'The Last Lecture: Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams' which he delivered in the final months of his life.

Five Takeaways From His Talk

1. Time is a commodity:

If we value our time the way we value our money, we will realise its true worth and distribute it carefully. How much is my time actually worth? In light of learning Randy Pausch's own story, many of us would not trade years off our life even in exchange for large amounts of money - yet why don't we value our finite time by spending it meaningfully rather than allowing it to flee away?

2. 80-20 Rule:

80% of value comes from 20% of our work - so we should prioritise taking care of that 20% before anything else. Focus on doing the right things rather than doing things right.

3. Covey's 4 Quadrants To-Do:

After completing important tasks that are due soon, focus on the important tasks due later so that you can feel mentally relaxed having cleared out those that give you stress. Only move onto unimportant tasks once the important pipeline is fully completed.

4. Scheduling:

Time is made not found: identify the tasks worth completing and organise a committed schedule, keeping in mind opportunity costs. Plus, even if your schedule would need changing, that can only happen if the schedule exists in the first place!

5. Time Logging:

Logging time as it is spent will not only keep you organised but give you a complete view of where your time is going and where it is wasted.