NOTES FROM: *The Last Lecture,* by Randy Pausch

SUMMARY: I'll warn you straight up that this is one of the saddest books I've ever read, but out of *all* the books I *have* read, perhaps only a few have made a bigger impact on my life and work. I recommend this book *all the time,* and you should absolutely watch Randy's "Last Lecture" on YouTube if you can spare the time. Please, *spare the time.*

Plenty of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture," the idea being that they would reflect on the totality of their lives so far and offer their most life-changing wisdom, the kind of advice that you'd give knowing that this was your very last day on Earth. As it turns out, this *was* Randy's last lecture, something he knew going into it.

Randy's father used to say that whenever there's an elephant in the room, introduce them, and so he began his original lecture by showing the audience his latest CT scans. The scans showed an aggressive cancer spreading quickly throughout his body, and he mentioned in the beginning of the lecture that his doctors predicted that he had only a few months to live.

I warned you in the beginning. The actual lecture you'll see on YouTube is barely sad at all though! Except for maybe the ending and the beginning. But the book that came out of it is nothing less than heartbreaking. And brilliant. And phenomenal. And everything in between. Like I said, I recommend it *all the time,* and it's rarely - *very* rarely - that anyone will tell me they weren't profoundly changed by it. I know I was.

"Now our lives together had to be squeezed into a few months"

"Many would expect the talk to be about dying. But it had to be about living."

"The doctors told me I have three to six months of good health left. That was a month ago."

"Kids - more than anything else - need to know that their parents love them. Their parents don't have to be alive for that to happen."

"You've got to get the fundamentals right or else the fancy stuff isn't going to work."

"When you're screwing up and no one says anything to you any more, that means that they've given up on you."

"If you work hard enough, there will be things you can do tomorrow that you can't do today."

"The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something."

"Whatever news we get about the scans, I'm not going to die when we hear it. I won't die the next day, or the day after that, or the day after that. So today, right now, well this is a wonderful day."

Uncle Randy's Rules:

1) “No whining.”
2) “Whatever we do together, don't tell mom.”

"It's unlikely that I'll ever get to be a father to children over age six."

"So I left the store, happier to have 15 minutes than 16 dollars."

“When you're frustrated with people, when they make you angry, that may just be because you haven't given them enough time.”

“Hard work is the shortcut.”

“Go out and do for others what somebody did for you.”

“Always ask. They will say yes or no, but you will be the kind of person who asks.”

"Live like you're dying. But at the same time, I'm very much living like I'm still living."

"I'm aware that Chloe may not have any memory of me at all. She's too young. But I want her to grow up knowing that I was the first man ever to fall in love with her."

"In a sense, the last lecture gave me the chance to 'leave the field under my own power.'"