

**Citation:**

Pausch, R. & Zaslow, J. (2008). *The Last Lecture*. Hyperion: New York.

**Synopsis:**

“You can’t change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand”, now famous words from the late Prof. Randy Pausch of Carnegie Mellon University. *The Last Lecture* is a book consisting of sixty-one brief but poignant lessons, stories, examples that can add to the development and depth of any leader’s personality, style, philosophy, and perspective. Dr. Pausch does not specifically target any certain audience; he simply speaks to you as a person, an educator, a leader, a parent, a husband. Having accomplished many of his childhood dreams, he preaches the lessons he has learned along the way while providing his own insight for the reader to take away. From lessons of; choosing between being a Tigger or an Eeyore; to never forgetting your goals; how to overcoming obstacles; how to utilize time; being a team; to motivating those around you.

Dr. Pausch’s advice becomes something of a treasure because as the book is titled, *The Last Lecture*, it was based on his last lecture as a professor at Carnegie Mellon University. The last lecture series asks nominated professors to construct a talk of what they would say to their peers, students, family, if they knew they were going to die and this would indeed be their last lecture. Dr. Pausch had the unique opportunity of dealing with the realization of that he was indeed going to die and this would be his last lecture in the classroom, having been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and told he had months to live weeks before his lecture date.

**Usage:**

This book could be used as a supplement to a leadership course, as a resource for leaders to utilize in the classroom or during training sessions, it could also serve as a simple optional reading. Personally, I have based leadership training courses on the themes of the book with great success.

**Level:**

Leadership educators and students on all levels

**Personal Critique:**

*The Last Lecture* has served as a personal philosophical guide to my pedagogy in teaching leadership. Dr. Pausch gives advice and wisdom in the art of motivation, criticism, choosing attitude, gaining perceptions, and setting/reaching personal goals. I believe the book to be extremely applicable to any educator’s toolbox in regards to leadership or motivation of student leaders in any position found on campuses from work study’s to orientation leaders to athletes. It does have a touch of *Tuesdays with Morrie*-type passing the torch of knowledge to it in the sense of a dying teacher passing final lessons to his favorite student, regardless, the book is a great and quick read.

**Rating:**

4.5 This book is a must read for any educator who seeks to gain wisdom from someone who was granted the unfortunate opportunity to look back on the lessons their life has taught them and share that wisdom and knowledge with those who he cared most about.

Reviewed by: Joe Ginese