

THE LAST LECTURE

This was such an inspiring and thought-provoking lecture. I appreciate Randy's approach to sharing these ideas; it is personal, and he lived by all these messages.

There are many incredible messages that I could identify and relate to, especially:

- Brick walls are there for a reason: they show us our dedication; they let us prove how badly we want something.
- Bring something to the table.
- The power of enthusiasm.
- Most of what we learn, we learn indirectly (head fake).
- Have fun while learning something hard.
- Never lose the childlike wonder.
- Tell the truth.
- Apologize when you screw up.
- When you do the right thing, good stuff has a way of happening.
- Get a feedback loop, listen, and use it.
- Show gratitude.

As I watched The Last Lecture, I kept thinking about an experience I had when I was 23. After two years of attending school for something I knew wasn't for me, I took a break. My goal was to travel to explore what else I was interested in, and although I didn't know what that looked like exactly, I started seeking opportunities.

(I do have to say, it was a childhood dream to be a flight attendant...)

A friend worked for a company called Backroads, an active travel company that takes people on hiking, cycling, and multisport trips worldwide. After encouraging me to look at the trip leader position, I applied. The application and hiring process was extensive- only about 9% of those who applied were hired. It required a college degree and intensive knowledge of bike mechanics, amongst many other skills.

I can relate to the brick walls, and that was a moment I had to push through. I knew that although I didn't have a degree, I was curious and enthusiastic about learning everything I could. I knew my experience and perspective could be helpful, and I would have fun while learning and being challenged.

I was hired after several interviews, including flying to California for a final interview. I underwent extensive training for weeks before getting sent out into the field. My mentor explained that my enthusiasm for the position and learning the things I didn't know yet was more important than a degree, but she also held me to extremely high expectations.

The company has a strong feedback environment; on each trip, we would communicate the things that worked well and needed improvement verbally and in writing. We worked hard for a common goal and helped each other. We held each other accountable and pushed ourselves to improve, and all benefited from this.

Those years were some of the most challenging, informative, fun, and meaningful times I've experienced. I wouldn't have had them if it weren't for those people who pushed me, the brick walls that stopped me, and the curiosity that kept me excited and open.

Although I thought I was applying for a job that would pay me to explore the world and share my passion for nature with others, I walked away with so many more valuable lessons than I

could have imagined. There were many head fakes along the way, and there was so much more to digest in each situation than just the action or idea presented on the surface. Lessons in building my skills, trusting myself as a leader, teamwork, judgment, outward focus, the human body and behavior, the power of nature, sharing knowledge of the flora and fauna, logistics, culture, catering, and bike mechanics –were all learned indirectly.

I enjoyed this video and am grateful for all the important messages Randy shared in his last lecture.