

How did it make you feel? Could you relate? Take note of your thoughts on this. Please put those thoughts into writing this week. The reflection paper is part of your homework this week.

When I first saw how long the video was, I cried a bit on the inside. However, I am extremely happy I watched it.

"The Last Lecture" made me feel empowered as well as antsy because Randy (the speaker) highlighted numerous points that inspired me to keep working toward my goals. When he mentioned that it takes great strength to listen to those who criticize you instead of shutting them down, my mouth dropped open. As a human with great pride in what I do, I sometimes take criticism as an attack on my person, not on my performance. I am someone who wouldn't make a scene in the moment, but after, would feel incredible rage and frustration toward the situation. Which is valid, of course, because a twenty one year old has all the answers and is perfect in every way.

I have come to learn that accepting constructive criticism from others is not their way of saying you are a bad person. They are making time out of their day to focus on creating a better future for you. I connected this point with asking for help. There are many times in my life where I have been embarrassed to ask for help because of my pride. However, even Frodo didn't complete his journey without friends there to help him. Connecting with others in a deep and important way, can create doors that you never knew were available to you. Randy couldn't have achieved any of his childhood dreams without others around him.

After telling us about his dreams, he mentioned that he was a professor. He asked himself this question: "How can I enable the childhood dreams of others?" What an incredible phrase that defines the work I want to do in the world. How can I cultivate imagination and foster the dreams of others? While he taught undergraduates and I want to teach elementary age students, dreams are dreams. And how we respond to a student's dream can change their mindset forever. To cultivate imagination is allowing students to work without bounds. When Randy talked about the VR class he

taught and the projects they made, I felt immense pride. This is how I see teaching. Giving your students enough structure to get started, but a space to grow upon any new ideas they create in their head. When I told a student they could grow up and become a policeman in the water, he looked at me like I was the greatest person alive. When a student has someone to believe in their abilities, you cannot even start to imagine where they will go.

How we interact with others and how we present ourselves to the world is the fastest way to know if you will achieve your goals. Randy talks about this point throughout the lecture without blatantly showing us until the very end. The way we live our life, is going to define who helps us, what we get to achieve, and how we get there. I believe that connections are key to unlocking opportunities and Randy seemed to agree. I present myself in a way that allows for new opportunities to arise. In every job I take, I create connections and meaningful memories with each person I meet. This ensures that in the future, people will be there for me. Again, you cannot complete a worthwhile journey alone. Brick walls are hard to get through if you are the only one with a shiv working on it. I love that this was one of the hidden messages in the lecture. It reminded me that life isn't about your yearly salary or the car you drive, but the connections and experiences you make with others.

There was one last note I made when watching this lecture. No, it was not about the freakishly scary bunnies... However, that would be a valid topic to delve deeper into. Instead, I decided to note the importance of sharing your wisdom and knowledge with others. While Randy didn't specifically mention this in his lecture, he insinuated this message through his actions. Come to the table with the intention of helping others with your experiences. Humans are special because we live unique lives that tell different stories. This gives us an incredible opportunity to share knowledge that we have gained during those life experiences. There is a reason we have Ted Talks and books about guidance. We cannot experience everything there is to experience on this earth in one lifetime. This means that through the beauty of language, we can share what we have learned. I intend to

share my knowledge through my profession. I have not lived the same life my future students will live, however I can give them tools that they may not have had if they hadn't entered my classroom. I intend to share with others the tools I have gained through my life experiences just as Randy did with his. This is a beautiful way to cultivate and create imagination as well as help students through chapters of life that were not expected. Sharing life experiences can help connect us as human beings. As well as leading us toward potentially understanding situations that we have not lived, which grows empathy toward the differences in people.