Last Lecture Synopsis

I was deeply affected by Randy Pausch’s last lecture. I recently attended one of the last sermons by a pastor who was similarly afflicted by terminal cancer and who, like Pausch, faced his fate with a determination and courage that left me humbled. This personal parallel gave Pausch’s lecture a deep emotional resonance. Pausch focused on the time he had left and sought to use it to continue his work of enabling the dreams of others. The fact that he would spend some of his last days delivering his message added weight to its importance.

What affected me most was one phrase Pausch repeated over and over. That brick walls were not meant to keep us from our dreams, but to give us a chance to prove how much we want to achieve them. If we can adopt this perspective, it allows us to feel energized rather than discouraged when we face obstacles. I have often experienced the reverse effect, where I count and catalogue the obstacles to various dreams and allow these obstacles to intimidate me. Pausch’s perspective offers a different interpretation. That obstacles help us achieve our dreams by instilling in us perseverance.

Lastly, I was inspired by the work that Pausch and his students did in the building virtual worlds class and the Entertainment Technology Center. I am excited by the prospect of standing at the intersection of art and engineering to leverage technology toward creative ends. I believe the continued rapid advance of technology offers us ever-increasing avenues to express our creativity in innovative ways. I look forward to where this course leads me and what seeds might be planted.