

To be honest, Randy Pausch's lecture did not resonate with me. I have an interest in sociology, and I think the line of thinking that interest has taught me to have has made me quite a bit cynical when it comes to these sorts of advice lectures. What bothers me most is he summarizes his talk with, "don't complain; just work harder." While obviously it's infinitely more difficult to achieve your goals without hard work, I think blanket statements like this aren't very meaningful, as they inherently disregard a person's unique circumstances, and with this statement specifically, "hard work" is going to be extremely subjective. In the talk, Pausch's story starts with going to Brown and Carnegie Mellon, and that by itself is already a nearly impossible privilege for so many people to attain, it would be ridiculous to imply that people don't get to those places because they simply don't want it enough. I suppose it's just difficult to relate to his lecture as a whole when he starts from a place of considerable success and skips a lot of the beginning steps, which I think are often the hardest hurdles to get past.

One thing I did like was his point of how one of the best ways to get into position to achieve your own dreams is by helping others achieve theirs. Cynically, I think a lot of success is based on who you know, and I think there are a lot of negatives to that, however, I really do like to believe that acts of kindness do find their way of returning to you. I think it's easy to only focus inwardly and think about one's own goals, and when you do that, you miss out not only on the fulfillment that comes from helping others, but the opportunities that arise, ones which you never would have even thought of, that result from helping another person succeed. With that, I also like how he didn't achieve his dreams word for word. I thought it was interesting how he didn't dedicate his life to achieving one thing exactly, he just got close enough to the idea to get what he wanted out of it, or learn something from it. I liked the overall theme of not necessarily chasing something, but putting yourself in the position where those things could come together organically.