

Last Lecture Reflection

(A bit “stream-of-consciousness” style)

What struck me most about this lecture was the simple fact that one person could do so much in a relatively short lifetime. I'm not sure I could say that I relate to very much of it, except, I suppose, the universal shared experience of having setbacks. It was a good talk, although I'm not sure if I felt exactly inspired... But I think that's because of my own negative thought processes, which is a different subject. There were, however, some good thought-provoking points and pieces of wisdom that stood out, so I'll talk about some of those.

I agreed grudgingly with the part about your critics being the people who care about you most, although the way he put it was a bit of a new perspective. He explained how it's actually worse to be in a place where people aren't telling you what you're doing wrong anymore, because that means they've given up on you. In my major I have to be highly tolerant of criticism of course, and I don't always take it as well as I should. I hope I can get past that and be grateful for the criticism because of what it truly means.

“Experience is what you get when you didn't get what you wanted” also stood out to me, because I feel I've already had so many wasted years in my relatively short life, and it's hard to appreciate the lessons I've learned sometimes and look past the cost of those things and be able to say it was all worth it. Perhaps later in life I will appreciate it more.

I also liked the idea of the head-fakes and how parents send their kids to do things more so that they can learn soft skills than so they can be the next best dancer or piano player or swimmer. I wish public schools could integrate this concept so more kids could grow up loving learning instead of growing to hate it because of “school” and the connotations it has. I liked that he used this concept both in the Masters curriculum he co-designed and also in his educational programming world, Alice.

I think the lesson he highlighted the most but got you to think about differently each time was the brick wall thing. It's as if the natural difficulties of life, not just the purposely designed ones, are there specifically to weed out the people who were maybe just meant for something else. It can be a comforting thought, because it means that those who want something badly enough will usually be able to find a way to get it if they try hard enough (and if they don't get it, the process of trying could be even more valuable). But it can also interestingly be discouraging in a way, if you're the one being weeded out because you don't care enough or the career path you thought you wanted no longer seems like a good fit when you've gotten to know it better.

Overall, it was a very interesting video. He's an engaging speaker with an impressive legacy and an astonishingly good attitude. That alone should be inspiring enough, I suppose.