William Hanley

The Last Lecture

I have a hard time with these sorts of videos sometimes. There is a lot that you can get from it, I did find for instance the ‘brick walls being there for a reason’ idea to be useful. He is also a good speaker, can keep your attention and be humorous, especially in his position. But I’m not sure I can believe or follow some of the things he says, even though I recognize that I can be an ‘Eeyore’. I can understand Eeyore though, and Tigger is just annoying. I just don’t think the best advice to give people is to have fun and always look on the bright side of life, though I feel like that certainly helped make the speech popular. When you say, ‘If you lead your life the right way karma will take care of itself’, I’m going to have a problem probably, karma is for the privileged. I do certainly hope that I can handle myself and function as well as he does so close to death. I think it is important as well to be attentive and kind to those around you, and not just in their career paths or goals. In a coincidence, this week my partner mentioned to me she read an article from another near-death cancer sufferer, basically saying what they’ve learned from cancer is ‘nothing useful for you, anyway.’ I’ll end on the last paragraph from their article:

‘I hope, despite the statistics, I will have years to forget what I’ve learned in this experience, remember again the priorities I used to balance, knowing—but not feeling the weight of knowing—that time is limited. I’d like mostly to fail to appreciate each moment, to play catch just to play catch. Not feeling that life has to be constantly appreciated before it slips away is probably a sign of a good life—which is exactly the kind of cliché that feels important when said by someone dying.’ (Summers, 2022)

Reference:

Summers, J. S. (2022, August 29). What I’ve Learned From Having Cancer Is Nothing. Slate Magazine. Retrieved September 9, 2022, from https://slate.com/human-interest/2022/08/cancer-memoir-learning-from-illness-critical-view.html