

# Introduction

Randy Pausch describes his cancer as "an engineering problem."  
How was this a helpful way to look at his illness?

He talks about the lecture as a means of expression, and a way to reach his kids: "If I were a painter, I would have painted for them. If I were a musician, I would have composed music. But I am a lecturer. So I lectured." There are so many ways to communicate. What are your own avenues for self-expression?

Randy has always recognized the importance of time management. What did you think of his decision to work on the book while riding his bike?

# Chapter 1: An Injured Lion Still Wants to Roar

Randy almost didn't go to Pittsburgh to deliver his last lecture. His wife Jai had wanted him to stay home with her and the kids. What did you learn from his discussions with her about this?

Randy chose "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams" as the topic for his lecture. In what ways would this allow him to tell the story of his life, and to enable the dreams of others?

# Chapter 3 The Elephant in the Room

Randy decided to begin his talk in a specific way - showing his CT scans, introducing "the elephant in the room," assuring everyone he's not in denial, and doing push-ups. What made this effective?

# Chapter 4 The Parent Lottery

Randy said he realized many of his dreams because he had terrific parents. What details from his childhood do you think led to the successes he had later in life? Are there lessons in Randy's story for people who've had less-fulfilling childhoods, or absentee parents? What advice might you give to those who didn't win "the parent lottery"?

# Chapter 5 The Elevator in the Ranch House

In his talk, Randy encouraged parents to allow their children to paint on their bedroom walls. "As a favor to me," he said, "let 'em do it. Don't worry about the home's resale value."

The real message he says he was trying to give was this: Find ways to help your kids be creative. Nurture those instincts in them.

What would you paint on your bedroom walls if you were given permission to do so? What other creative outlet would you like to pursue, if your parents gave the OK?

## Chapter 6: Getting to Zero G

The chapter ends with the line: "If you can find an opening, you can probably find a way to float through it." What's the lesson to be learned from Randy's attempts to get onto that "Vomit Comet"?

# Chapter 7: I Never Made It to the NFL

This is a chapter about football, but so many of the lessons in it can apply elsewhere in our lives:

- Talk about ways fundamentals are important off the playing field, too.
- Randy believed our critics are often the ones saying they still care about us. How in your own life has a critic helped you become a better person?
- Randy loved using "head fakes." What are some other head fakes that teachers and parents have used?

# Chapter 11: The Happiest Place on Earth

Throughout the book, Randy says: "Brick walls are there for a reason. They're not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something."

What are the brick walls you've faced in your own life? How did you get over them?