

# 'YOU CAN'T MAKE MORE TIME'

Randy Pausch's heart-felt views on using time to the fullest

Randy Pausch was truly passionate about the benefits of time management. He was asked to write this article for *BusinessWeek* not long before his death on July 25 at age 47, and he was excited to have the opportunity. In fact, it led to one of the last e-mails I got from him, which was full of exclamation points and closed with the word "AWESOME!" In the end, he didn't have the energy to finish it. Thus, a few of us who were his friends have put the piece together using the phrases we heard from him many times.

—Jessica Hodgins, Carnegie Mellon University professor and colleague

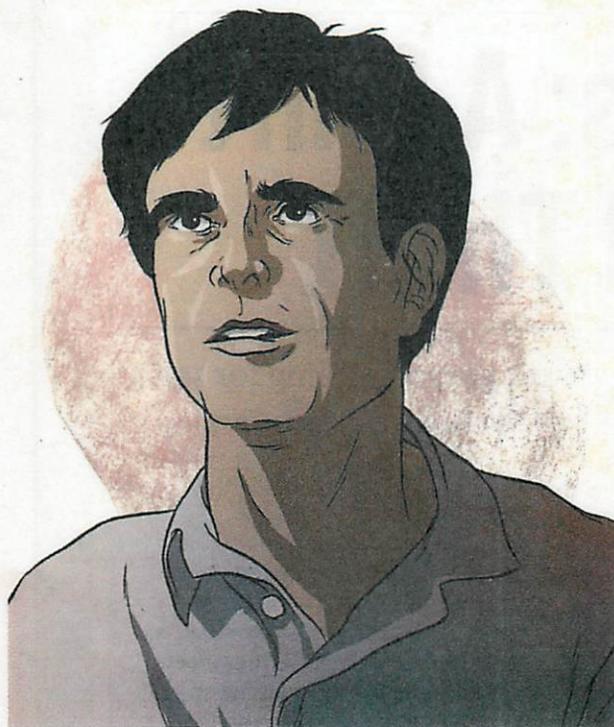
So you've decided to take the time to read this article. Every moment of our lives requires this kind of decision, which is the fundamental time-management question: Should I do X, or should I do Y?

All his life, Randy Pausch knew time was a gift. He was always logical about time, sometimes to the point of exasperating his friends with comments about the size of their in-boxes. But his reverence for hours, minutes—even seconds—served him well.

He would stand before a room full of students and tell them time was their most precious commodity. They all knew they had finite money, but they lived as if they had infinite time. "You can always make more money later," Randy would say. "But you can't make more time." Time, like money, he explained, must be explicitly managed.

He had all sorts of practical advice for work. Stand while on the phone. (You'll be more eager to finish up.) Avoid copying five people on an e-mail when you want something done. (Each will assume that one of the other four is going to step up to the plate.) Minimize interruptions. (Turn off the "new e-mail" popup alert or shut down e-mail during your good working hours.)

Other tips were reminders of the big picture. Do the "ugliest" thing first—everything else will come more easily



after that. Make time for the important things, not just for critical things; it is all too easy to spend time fighting fires rather than doing the necessary deep thinking. And recognize that the best reason to save time in your work is to increase time with your family.

## SO LITTLE OF IT LEFT

Toward the end of his life, Randy became something of a poster boy for the limits of time. Last September he gave a "last lecture" at Carnegie Mellon. He talked about the joys of life and how much he appreciated it, even with so little of his own left. It was a talk for his students and colleagues, but because it was recorded, he hoped it could be a message to his three kids, too.

Footage of the talk unexpectedly spread online, and he heard from thousands of people. (As a result, another lecture of his, on time management, was widely watched online, too.) Many wanted to know if his views on time changed as he got closer to the end of his life. But there were no great epiphanies. "Everything now is more so," he told people.

He lived longer than doctors predicted, and he mapped out that "extra" time with fervor. He went on a few romantic trips with his wife, Jai. He made a point of doing memorable activities with his children, such as swimming with dolphins and visiting Disney World. He was trying to give his kids—ages 2, 3, and 6—vivid memories of their time together.

Even before the last stages of his illness, people asked him how to best prioritize their time. His answer was simple: "If I don't do X, will it matter? And if I have to pick either X or Y, which one is more important? At the end of my life, which of these things will I be glad I did?" Time is all we have. And, like Randy, we may find one day we have less than we think. **BW |**

Randy Pausch's time-management lecture is viewable at [www.thelastlecture.com](http://www.thelastlecture.com). The Last Lecture, by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow, is published by Hyperion.