



Bay State College

Fall 2011 First Year Experience Common Reading

Study Guide

***The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch**

First, take a few minutes to go online and watch a video clip of Randy Pausch talking about *The Last Lecture*, which you can find at: <http://bit.ly/iST1Ky>, or search on YouTube for “Randy Pausch's; A Final Farewell.”

Briefly read through this study guide to the end. The study guide breaks the book down into sections and asks questions that are intended to help you better understand the book and reflect on your reactions to it.

As you read through the book, you may find it helpful to come back to this study guide and consider the questions from each section.

Intro-Chapters 1-4

Pages ix-26

1. Explain the author’s “engineering problem.”
2. What was the title of his last lecture? What do you predict his lecture to be about?
3. Choose three different points from chapter 1 or 2. Why did those items caught your attention?
4. What was the elephant in the room?
5. If you were in the audience for the lecture, what would you think your impressions of the opening would be?
6. Why does the author think he won the parent lottery?
7. Think about your own experience with the parent lottery in your life.
8. Pick your favorite of Randy’s father’s quotes. Why does it appeals to you?
9. What was one of the benefits of needing a dictionary to get through dinner in Randy’s house?

10. Put yourself in Randy's shoes for a minute. What would be something of value that you would choose to do if you knew you only had a few months left? Why would you choose that?

Chapters 5- 8

Pages 27-42

11. What was the author's room like while he grew up?
12. What is your reaction to his elevator?
13. Make a parallel to your own life. Have you ever been given that type of freedom? If so, what happened? If not, what would you do given that type of freedom?
14. What do you have to "bring to the table" when you contribute to a project? What is your best skill set?
15. What is your evaluation of Coach Graham? Would you want him as a coach? Why or why not?
16. Think of an example of a type of head fake that you have encountered in your life.
17. What would you be able to contribute to a leadership encyclopedia? Would you want to contribute?

Chapters 9-11

Pages 43-54

18. What insight did you gain into the "no win scenario"? Do you believe that there is such a thing? Why or why not?
19. What is the biggest prize that you have ever won? Explain the situation.
20. What is a big goal for you? What would happen if a brick wall got in your way?

Chapters 12-13

Pages 57-65

21. What is the benefit of spinning things in a positive direction? What message does that give to the audience?
22. What is the lesson to be learned from seeing Randy in the convertible?
23. What would people say if they saw you in an unguarded moment?

Chapters 14-16

Pages 66-79

24. What did you think about the punishment given to Randy's sister after the lunch box incident?

25. What was the lesson learned?
26. Did you like Uncle Randy's rules? Why/why not?
27. Name two different ideas that struck you about the "romancing the brick wall" chapter.
28. How would you react in the same situation?

Chapters 17-20
Pages 80-96

29. What did you think about the balloon experience?
30. What was the lesson learned from the dents in the cars?
31. What was your impression of the New Year's Eve event?
32. Name something that struck you about Randy, the doctor or Jai's behavior in the chapter. Why did it resonate with you?
33. What impressed you about the chapter on Randy's father?

Chapters 21-23
Pages 97-111

34. What kind of person are you? A clutterer? Neat? Explain.
35. What positives could you see from keeping a journal?
36. What did you think about the ticket experience?
37. What is one of your goals (from the beginning of the year)? Is it broken down into appropriate pieces?
38. Which was your favorite Pauschism? Why?

Chapters 24-26
Pages 112-125

39. What did you think about the peer assessment? Is it an accurate way to assess peer contribution and efforts? Why or why not?
40. How important do you think it is that we have someone in our lives to keep us in check?
41. What interested you in the Jedi chapter?

42. Using Randy Pausch's restrictions, what virtual world would you be interested in creating? Why?

Chapters 27-31

Pages 126-137

43. What did you think about the Alice program? What question might you ask about the program?

44. In your opinion, what was more important – the bedtime or watching the moon landing? Why do you feel that way?

45. What is your view on the earnest vs. hip debate?

46. In regards to Randy's deal with his mother over the dining room chair, which argument did you side with? Why?

Chapters 32-39

Pages 138-149

47. What advice could you give to someone who has a tendency to whine?

48. In your opinion, what strategy was better in regards to dealing with stress?

49. Which of the tips for working in a group was most useful to you? Why?

50. Which of the clichés was most applicable to your life? Why did you feel that way?

51. What is one possible benefit from being the "first penguin"?

Chapters 40-50

Pages 150-168

52. What could you do to get people's attention? What would be the benefit of doing so?

53. Tell about how you felt when you both received and gave a thank you note.

54. How would you feel if someone stood up for you the way Randy did for Dennis? Why would that be valuable to you?

55. Do you agree that a bad apology is worse than no apology? Why or why not?

56. What is your view of the \$100,000 Salt and Pepper shakers? Would that event take place today? Should it?

Chapters 51-58
Pages 168-188

57. What is the benefit of having the perception that no job is beneath you?
58. If someone offered to “get you in” to the school of your choice, how would you react?
59. How did the baseball umpires benefit both the players and the community?
60. Are you a Tigger or an Eeyore? Why do you choose to be that way?
61. What is the benefit of accepting help from others? Is it easy to accept or offer that help? Why or why not?

Chapters 59-61
Pages 191-206

62. What struck you about Randy’s thoughts regarding his children? Name two specifics and why you remember those comments.
63. Tell about someone in your life who is a caregiver. Is that someone putting on “others’ oxygen masks” before his/her own?
64. How did you feel about the last two head fakes in the book? Did it remind you of something in your life?