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Brick Walls: Facing and Overcoming Adversity

Last month my husband and I were fortunate enough to attend the Michael Smerconish Book Club (from Philly's 1210AM "The Big Talker") where he welcomed Jeffery Zaslow, *Wall Street Journal* columnist and co-author of *The Last Lecture*, with Randy Pausch. *The Last Lecture* has spent 12+ weeks on the bestseller list since its debut in April.

The book is a motivational nonfictional expansion of the last lecture given by Carnegie Mellon professor Randy Pausch. At the time the lecture was held, Pausch was in his mid-40s and had recently been diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. But his lecture wasn't about dying; instead it was about overcoming obstacles, realizing your dreams and the dreams of others, and living the heck out of every moment.

You can't help feeling inspired and moved after reading *The Last Lecture*. What struck me the most was Randy's description of brick walls we all face in life. He says, "Brick walls are there for a reason. They give us a chance to show how badly we want something."

As entrepreneurs, we face adversity and hit brick walls on a pretty regular basis, right? Everywhere we turn today, we are surrounded by one challenge or another. Sometimes it comes in the form of:

- Budget objections because the economy is forcing tighter budgets
- Indecisiveness because people don't want to make a decision until after the election this November
- Vacation-itis because it is summer and people "flake out" and don't want to make hard decisions

The more aggressive you are and the more risks you take, it is only natural to conclude that there will be more brick walls to face. As entrepreneurs, these are brick walls that we jump over, break through, or even shimmy under to get to the other side. Often times, entrepreneurs don't realize just how strong and agile they really are.

But I am also the first to admit that sometimes brick walls stop us in our tracks. So how do you pick yourself up and make the determination of whether or not that particular brick wall is worth conquering?

Here are my Six Steps to Conquering Brick Walls

1. **Breathe** – This means to be still and clear your mind of all the "mind clutter." Take the emotion out of the situation and become centered. As entrepreneurial-spirited individuals, we become engrossed in our business endeavors, and many people around us just don't "get" us. So when you hit a brick wall, it is vital that you take a deep breath,

clear your mind, remove the emotion from the situation, and become centered once more.

2. **Reevaluate** – This involves digging deeper to assess the situation.
 - a. Reevaluate your motives. Figure out if this is truly what you want and why it is so important to you by asking these questions: Is this really what you want? Why is this so important? Is it the money? Is it part of your future growth plan? Does it fulfill one of your core values?
 - b. Reevaluate your resources. Determine what resources you have and how you can better utilize them by asking these questions: What resources are you not taking full advantage of (as it relates to this particular brick wall) that you can tap into? Is it strategic partners? A business coach? A local “angel” investor network? A local mastermind group? A spouse or significant other that can act as a sounding board for you?
3. **Magic Wand** -If you could wave the magic wand and remove the brick wall you are facing, how would you remove it and what would your life look like afterwards? Don't allow yourself to make excuses for not addressing the wall (I don't have the finances or I don't have enough time). Simply wave the magic wand and allow yourself to think, “In a perfect world, what do those two things look like?” Then ask yourself the question again, is this what you really want and why?
4. **Visualize and Believe It** – If you can't believe it and see it, it will never come to fruition. Entrepreneurs are visionaries that don't get hung up in the details (nor do we necessarily like them). And often times, the people around us tend not to understand us or our big picture ideas. As a result, we get frustrated, which is okay, but don't allow this frustration to be part of your brick wall. Instead, visualize the end result and believe it.
5. **Be flexible** – You must be flexible! Because even when you visualize it, believe in it, wave your magic wand, evaluate your wants and resources, clear your head of mind-clutter, and even take the emotion out, the reality is sometimes life just doesn't go the way we want. By being flexible, you allow yourself to be open to alternatives for overcoming the brick wall.
6. **Get Focused** - Now that you have everything worked out in your mind, get focused and put an action plan in place that is measurable, time-driven, and also realistic.

Brick walls challenging us on a regular basis, but entrepreneurs can be successful in this environment when they get a little more creative in conquering them. Tear down those brick walls!

If you are facing a brick wall, sign up for a complimentary Business Coaching Strategy Session today. www.jadcc.com