



The four ways to handle brick walls

Bởi:

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“Brick walls are not there to stop you, they are there to make you prove how much you want something.”

Randy Pausch: *The Last Lecture*

Randy Pausch was living the American Dream. He had a job he loved as a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, a wonderful family, and fascinating hobbies. Then he was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer and given less than six months to live. As he was dying, he was giving speeches and writing a beautiful book about lessons on how to live.

We all sooner or later run into brick walls. When that happens, we need to remember the admonition in the title of the book by W Mitchell book (of whom more later): *It's Not What Happens to You It's What You Do About It*. There are four possible responses to running into a brick wall, each of which can be appropriate, depending upon the situation.

Response #1, Quit: The first is to quit, giving up the quest. After a certain number of years, someone who's been toiling away in the minor leagues has to accept that the dream of playing in the Big Leagues is not going to be realized and to find a new set of goals to pursue. I started Values Coach in 1994 after realizing that the insurmountable brick wall standing between me and my then-goal of being CEO of a large hospital was trying to tell me that my calling in life lay elsewhere. Sometimes brick walls are there to tell you that you are on the wrong path.

Response #2, Keep hammering: The second is to keep pounding away at that brick wall, enduring all the pain and frustration of picking yourself up time and again, knowing that it will knock you down many times before you finally crash through. Every spouse of an alcoholic or parent of a child who's gotten into drugs knows the daily anguish of running into a seemingly impregnable brick wall, hoping that this will be the day that one last crash into that wall will lead to a breakthrough. So does every author who has

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papered his or her walls with rejection letters and yet continued to buckle down at the writing desk the next day.

Response #3, Shift gears: The third is to find a way over or around the wall. When Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard started the company that still bears their names, their first project was a pin counter for bowling allies. It hit the market and immediately ran into an impenetrable brick wall. Rather than pounding away trying to sell the device with brute force marketing, they tried something else - and developed the technology that Walt Disney used for the soundtrack *Fantasia*. They launched a company that for more than seven decades was a model of both technological and cultural excellence, and that today is trying once more to get around another brick wall.

Response #4, change the playing field: The fourth is to find a new wall. When I visited the Center for the Intrepid, a high-tech rehabilitation facility for the most horribly injured Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I met men and women who, because of their injuries, would need to find careers other than the ones they were pursuing before being sent to war. Their work at CFI represented the first of many new walls that will continue to test their resolve.

It's important for you to ask what the brick walls you run into might be trying to tell you. In my case, the brick walls that stood between me and my "dream job" of hospital CEO were trying to tell me that I needed to change course and find what author Carlos Castaneda famously called "a path with heart." But the brick walls I run into when I get rejection letters from publishers are trying to tell me that I need to work harder at being a better writer and being a better promoter of what I've written.

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