



**PETRA**  
**PEOPLE**

**OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLE THAT IS YOU**



## OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLE THAT IS YOU

### LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

Oftentimes I find my biggest obstacle is, well, myself. Some inspiration from the late Randy Pausch has helped me identify how to get out of my own way.

#### Your Brick Wall is the Mirror—Shatter It

I truly believe we can only reach our fullest potential when we're challenged.

Challenges are often described as barriers or brick walls that get in our way. I say, those blockades are your greatest opportunities.

As I sit in a leadership conference in Arizona, my thoughts are confirmed and perhaps better articulated as the speaker references the late Randy Pausch, a professor and author of "The Last lecture." Pausch said, "The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something."

If you're like me, your brick wall is what you see when you look in the mirror—You get in the way of your own progress. You are your greatest barrier.

Just like all challenges, you have an opportunity for growth when you face the barrier, or the mirror, stare it down and shatter it.

I find most business leaders have difficulty admitting that their leadership style may be their biggest barrier, and even more difficulty tearing it down for two reasons:

1. Leaders are accustomed to identifying and remediating external challenges like profit margins and HR matters, they often fail to reverse the focus on internal reflection.
2. Leaders don't want to identify themselves as the brick walls because that's akin with identifying a weakness, and leaders can't be weak, right?



This second reason brings me back to my original point—Tackling a growth opportunity does not make you weak, it makes you strong. Stop limiting yourself and start becoming the best version of yourself you can be.

Here's how to shatter that mirror:

**\*Ask**—Pose to your team members this question: What do I need to do to be a better leader? Set “Vegas-style” rules, what you say here stays here, so you create safe zone where truth can flourish.

Yes, asking the question is simple, but the answer, especially if it's truthful, may sting. Actually, if it doesn't sting, ask again.

**\*Listen**—When you feel the pain of the truth, don't react. Don't make excuses, tighten your fists or clench your jaw. Instead, let it sink in. Once absorbed, ensure the messenger that you appreciate his or her candor.

Pausch also said, “Your critics are the ones telling you they still love you and care. Worry when you do something badly and nobody bothers to tell you.”

In this process you're soliciting criticism, so it's a bit different, but the message is the same. When a member of your team is honest with you and gives you constructive advice, take it as a compliment. It's those team members who don't offer valuable feedback that may not feel invested in the future of your team or company.

**\*Act**—Actually take the advice of your team members and act on it. Dramatic change to your leadership style may be needed. This is the actionable step that will fulfill your ultimate goal of tearing down the brick wall or shattering your mirror to achieve personal and company growth.

Pausch continued his statement on brick walls by saying, “The brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people.”

Many aren't strong enough to shatter their mirror, but you are, which is why you're going to take your business and your leadership abilities to the next level and your competitor will not.

# THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

**The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.**

## **Looking to change your business life - forever?**

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

*Andy Bailey is lead entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra and serves as the Entrepreneur Organization's global membership director. Visit his blog at [www.petracoach.com](http://www.petracoach.com) for more business and leadership insight.*

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