



“Fascinating! A must-read for everyone in business school.”

TEMPLE GRANDIN, bestselling author of *The Autistic Brain*

# NO GREATNESS WITHOUT GOODNESS

How a Father's Love Changed a Company  
and Sparked a Movement

---

RANDY LEWIS

RET **Walgreens** Senior Vice President

Fascinating. This book should be required reading in every business school to teach future business leaders that hiring people with disabilities and making innovations in the workplace are both good business and the right thing to do.

**TEMPLE GRANDIN**

Author of *Thinking in Pictures* and *The Autistic Brain*

Randy Lewis is a real trailblazer. He never forgot his community during his very successful business years. This book is a real eye-opener. He put his career on the line to demonstrate that serving the needs of the community also serves the needs of business. When you do both together, you really have achieved success.

**BOB WRIGHT**

Cofounder of Autism Speaks, former vice chairman of General Electric Company, former chairman and CEO of NBC Universal

Unconditional love, unending patience, and total dedication to a good cause create miracles. What a better world we would have following Randy's example.

**C. R. WALGREEN III**

Chairman emeritus, Walgreens Company

A powerful story! This book should be adopted as a must-read in all MBA programs in order to inspire leaders of consequence. Randy's story proves that leading with heart is the only way to lead.

**THOMAS F. KELLER**

Dean Emeritus of the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University

It was a privilege to attend the grand opening of the distribution plant in Anderson, South Carolina. Many employees, almost all of them disabled, told me of their great affection for and gratitude toward Randy. His support of their abilities to help Walgreens as employees of the company provides them self-confidence, growth, and a future as productive citizens. This book reveals the path Randy followed to his incredible success in the corporate world and highlights how much his success is rooted in family and faith. Few executives have done what

Randy has accomplished, but all of us can use him as a role model for superior, contemporary leadership. I am a better person for knowing him and his family and calling them friends.

**JANET HILL**

Member, boards of directors of Wendy's, Dean Foods, Echo360, and the Carlyle Group

This is a beautiful book linking personal experience and trauma to constructive efforts to provide those with disabilities opportunities to participate in the mainstream. This is a story with great poignancy that will convince you through both your heart and your brain.

**HERBERT PARDES, MD**

Executive vice chairman of the board of trustees, NewYork-Presbyterian

This is the story of a company, its leader, and its workforce changing the world for thousands of people with disabilities. It is a story that should inspire us all.

**SENATOR TOM HARKIN**

I'm convinced we all have a purpose in life. Randy Lewis's story is one of how purpose, compassion, and commitment to excellence have taught ordinary people to do the extraordinary. He is truly changing the world.

**STEVE SZILAGYI**

Supply chain executive, Lowe's Companies, Inc.

Randy Lewis offers valuable lessons for building a better society, demonstrating the tremendous value of focusing on people's abilities, not their disabilities. Having traveled across the country for discussions about how to address the persistently high rate of unemployment for people with disabilities, I can confidently state that no one makes a more powerful case than Randy that hiring these individuals isn't about charity; it's good for the bottom line. Thanks in large part to his leadership, Walgreens is changing the

way the way we view this issue in a way that has the potential to improve the quality of life for millions of people.

**JACK MARKELL**

Governor of Delaware

Randy Lewis has forever changed employment practices. With his vision and commitment, businesses from around the world can see recruiting people with disabilities as hiring people's ability and benefiting the company's bottom line.

**CHET COOPER**

Founder of ABILITYJobs.com and publisher of *ABILITY* magazine

When it comes to monumental, attitudinal, start-a-movement consequences in the world of business, I don't know anyone who has accomplished what Randy Lewis has. In his new book, he shares an intensely personal story of heart, home, work, faith, doubt, and courage. The book begins with the birth of their autistic son and ends with Randy's role in leading Walgreens—the world's largest drugstore chain—to become the global model in proving that disabled employees in large numbers not only match but often exceed their peers in the workplace. This is a compelling, insightful, compassionate account that most of us won't believe until we read it. Here is an amazing feat of faith and foresight come true—an account full of steadiness and inspiration, a drumbeat to victory over insurmountable odds, a moral tale well told—that demonstrates an incomparable love that can develop between so-called haves and have-nots.

**ALLAN COX**

CEO counselor and author of *Change the Way You Face the Day*

This is a book about the transforming power of love—the love of a father for his son, certainly, but also the genuine love that can flow well beyond the bonds of family or kinship to effect transformation in entire structures in business and the wider society. Randy Lewis

shows us how faith and love can be put into practice to make this world a more just and compassionate place . . . and be good business, to boot.

**JEFFREY D. LEE**

Episcopal bishop of Chicago

Randy helped one of the nation's landmark companies to see, and seize, the chance to employ an underappreciated—and too often misunderstood—workforce, challenge old myths and assumptions, advance our culture, and set an example for others. Best of all, he showed that we should never overlook or underestimate anyone who wants to contribute to our nation's economy and better their lives along the way. In doing so, Randy underscored a valuable lesson about doing good by doing good business.

**GREG WASSON**

CEO of Walgreens

Randy Lewis is a pioneer, demonstrating through his efforts at Walgreens that people with disabilities, given the chance and the tools, will succeed. By harnessing the power of business and the longing in each of us to make a difference, he has done what many thought impossible. This is a must-read for corporate leaders.

**MARCA BRISTO**

President of Access Living, former chair on the National Council on Disability

A bold and courageous story—essential rightness exemplified. An inspiring read for business leaders, a heartwarming read for parents, and a must-read anyone facing a challenge.

**JOHAN AURIK**

Managing partner and chairman of the board, A.T. Kearney

Possessed with passion and skill, Randy Lewis spearheaded the effort to transform Walgreens distribution facilities into a work environment that was welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of people with disabilities. This book tells this touching and

moving story—one that is both highly personal and extremely professional—in Randy’s own words. Building on a successful heritage, Randy courageously led his team into uncharted yet extremely rewarding territory by integrating hardworking but humbled people yearning for purpose and eager to contribute. The results are thrilling. It is a wonderful story to read and witness.

**WILLIAM C. FOOTE**

Retired chairman and CEO of USG Corporation

Randy Lewis has led a truly remarkable life. There is much we can learn from everything he has done in the workplace and at home. I loved this book—it is a must-read, chock-full of great advice on how to make a difference and inspire others to do great things.

**NELSON PELTZ**

Founding partner and CEO of Trian Fund Management, L.P.

If you are looking for a way to inspire your team and make yours a better company, this book is a must-read. Inspired by experiences with his autistic son, Randy Lewis used solid business principles and innovational techniques to improve productivity by leveraging the unique talents of the disabled. In the process, he brought real meaning to the work and lives of thousands.

**DAVID W. BERNAUER**

Retired CEO of Walgreens

*No Greatness without Goodness* is an inspirational story. Randy, with ease and integrity, did the right thing in business, and everyone involved—from stakeholders to the disadvantaged—came out as winners. This book is about triumph, not just in the corporate world, but especially in the lives of people with disabilities.

**PAUL HOUSE**

Chairman of Tim Hortons

Randy Lewis changed the way we see the world in this superb book, as he guides us in a passionate new way to see Austin’s potential. As he tells his remarkable story of *No Greatness without Goodness* to my

classes, he inspires students to give of themselves for returns they can receive for their whole lives.

**PROFESSOR HOWARD HAAS**

University of Chicago

A heartwarming account of how one man's vision inspired many, from business leaders to frontline employees, to unlock the true mission and meaning of success in industry and in life.

**JEFF KELLAN**

Vice president of distribution, Toys“R”Us

A remarkable and inspiring story of how a father learned some of life's most important lessons from his autistic son and launched a revolution in career opportunities for the disabled. Sprinkled throughout with humor and wisdom, this is the “feel good” book of the year, and the best part is that it's all true.

**WILLIAM E. KIRWAN**

Chancellor, University System of Maryland

*No Greatness without Goodness* describes the power and impact of one person. Randy Lewis's love of his child changed corporate human resources strategy forever. The ability of a major corporation to enhance the lives of people often in the shadows is exhilarating and shows that one of the most important roles of corporate leaders is to create an environment where every person can reach their full potential.

**NANCY M. SCHLICHTING**

CEO of Henry Ford Health System, director of Walgreens Company

An extraordinary story of the power of the human spirit of one man and how Randy Lewis's unconditional love for his autistic son emboldened him to change Walgreens' workplace forever. In doing so, he has given hope to thousands with disabilities. Anything seems possible after reading *No Greatness without Goodness*.

**EMIL BROLICK**

CEO of Wendy's

# NO GREATNESS WITHOUT GOODNESS

How a Father's Love Changed a Company  
and Sparked a Movement

---

RANDY LEWIS

RET Walgreens Senior Vice President



*Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
Carol Stream, Illinois*

*To Kay, of course*

Visit Tyndale online at [www.tyndale.com](http://www.tyndale.com).

*TYNDALE* and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

*No Greatness without Goodness: How a Father's Love Changed a Company and Sparked a Movement*

Copyright © 2014 by J. Randolph Lewis. All rights reserved.

Cover and author photographs by Stephen Vosloo, copyright © 2013 by Tyndale House Publishers. All rights reserved.

Designed by Jacqueline L. Nuñez

Edited by Stephanie Rische

Published in association with the literary agency of Mendel Media Group, LLC,  
115 West 30th Street, Suite 800, New York, NY 10001.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Some of the names have been changed out of respect for the privacy of the individuals mentioned in this book.

ISBN 978-1-4143-8364-4

Printed in the United States of America

20 19 18 17 16 15 14  
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# Contents

CHAPTER 1	Thank You and Yes	1
CHAPTER 2	Go with the Terrain	9
CHAPTER 3	Connecting	19
CHAPTER 4	Finding Gold in Dark Places	23
CHAPTER 5	Be Ready	29
CHAPTER 6	Archimedes and the Scorpion	33
CHAPTER 7	Money, Mission, and Meaning	41
CHAPTER 8	Principles Require Action	47
CHAPTER 9	Find the Crack in the Concrete	51
CHAPTER 10	Playing Chess	55
CHAPTER 11	Failure Is Just a Time-Out	59
CHAPTER 12	Compassion and Justice	63
CHAPTER 13	Adjusting Our Sails	71
CHAPTER 14	Pick Your Moment	75
CHAPTER 15	Best Practices	83
CHAPTER 16	Leaders Go before Their Troops	89
CHAPTER 17	I'd Better See Some Dinosaurs	93
CHAPTER 18	Manage Your Fear	95
CHAPTER 19	Cash in Your Chips	99
CHAPTER 20	Cathedral Builders	103
CHAPTER 21	Crossing the Rubicon	107
CHAPTER 22	Eliminate Fear	111
CHAPTER 23	Share the Story	115
CHAPTER 24	Where the Buck Stops	121
CHAPTER 25	The Journey Is Worth It	125

NO GREATNESS WITHOUT GOODNESS

- CHAPTER 26 Bucking the Status Quo 129  
CHAPTER 27 Don't Let the Big One Get Away 133  
CHAPTER 28 Esther's Lesson 139  
CHAPTER 29 The World Is Waiting 143  
CHAPTER 30 Katrina 147  
CHAPTER 31 Manage in the Gray 151  
CHAPTER 32 Share the Load 155  
CHAPTER 33 Sacagawea 159  
CHAPTER 34 Tough Love 167  
CHAPTER 35 Failure Is Not an Option 171  
CHAPTER 36 Breathing Life into the Dream 175  
CHAPTER 37 Positive Distractions 181  
CHAPTER 38 Clear and Elevating Goals 185  
CHAPTER 39 Verily, Verily 191  
CHAPTER 40 Being Andrew 195  
CHAPTER 41 A Place to Succeed 201  
CHAPTER 42 How Long? 209

Acknowledgments 213

- APPENDIX 1 Principles for Hiring People with Disabilities 217  
APPENDIX 2 Moving from Grief to Acceptance 223  
Notes 227  
About the Author 229

CHAPTER I

THANK YOU AND YES

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

MARGARET MEAD

I HAD PRACTICED my speech over and over, but I was still nervous as I climbed the stairs to the stage in the middle of the Paris Las Vegas ballroom. Surrounded by an audience of five thousand Walgreens store managers, I said that we were about to undertake something that had never been done before—anywhere. We were planning to build the most efficient distribution center of its kind in the world.

And we were going to staff one-third of the workforce with people who have disabilities, many of whom had never been offered a job. People with mental disabilities such as autism and cognitive delays. People with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spinal cord injuries, and missing limbs. We were going to pay them the same as people without disabilities, have them perform the same jobs, and hold them to the same standards. We would offer full benefits and full-time employment, taking hundreds of people off welfare rolls.

And then Walgreens would do something else we'd never done: we would open our doors to the world—even our competitors—and share everything we'd learned with them.

As I prepared to tell the five thousand store managers how we were going to do all this, the huge screens surrounding the stage filled with a picture of my family. That's because my family is where the story began.



Under a gorgeous full moon, not long before dawn on Friday the 13th of May in 1988, my wife, Kay, and I drove toward the hospital and into a future more frightening, more humbling, and more wondrous than anything we could have imagined.

Apparently full moons don't just bring out werewolves, as all the labor rooms were taken. After four hours of labor on a gurney in the hallway, Kay delivered our son into the world. He didn't make a sound. His silence surprised me—his older sister had been born wailing, but our boy didn't even whimper. Still attached to his mom, he gazed into his new world, content to leave the commotion to others.

Our dreams for our second child were of the ordinary kind—baseball, Cub Scouts, model airplanes—but we would soon learn that this was no ordinary child. None of those childhood pleasures were to be his. Instead, he was to be my catalyst, my inspiration, and my goad. He would compel me toward action that I never would have thought possible.

I would like to say that my son looked like me, but mostly he just looked like any other chubby, healthy, happy baby born that day. In keeping with my roots, I had placed a small bag of Texas dirt under his mother's hospital bed in Barrington, Illinois, so

one day he could claim that he'd been born on Texas soil. As we'd been planning even before we were married, Kay and I named him Austin, after the capital city of my home state. It was a good day.



In the following months, Austin progressed as expected, losing those chubby cheeks but not his beautiful smile. He crawled and learned to walk as he morphed from a baby to a toddler. Once he could walk, he was fast and curious. He terrorized Kay by slipping away during so many shopping trips that she began to tell store managers he was deaf so they would join the search for him. Austin's younger sister, Allison, was born eighteen months after he was, so with three kids in less than five years, we had a hectic but seemingly ordinary life.

Ordinary, that is, until the weekend we took the family to Kentucky for a reunion with Kay's relatives. I spent most of the weekend with two-year-old Austin on my shoulders, which was the only way I could keep him from sprinting away. It was a satisfactory arrangement for both of us. If I carried him, I didn't have to worry that he'd run off. And Austin was content to communicate his needs by twisting my head whichever direction he wanted to go.

Kay's family is full of schoolteachers, and as they watched her deal with a little boy who paid no attention to her praise or her scolding, they saw something we hadn't seen. And so began a lot of hushed conversations that would continue around us—but unheard by us—throughout the weekend. Kay's mother called soon after we returned home to suggest that our son ought to be tested for autism. Kay was so angry that she hung up without saying good-bye—something she'd never done before. The next week her mom sent us a book on autism. Angry with the kind of rage

born of deep fear, Kay put it on the nightstand in the guest room without opening it. It sat there for a year.

Before his second birthday, Austin had been using some words: *Daddy. Bye-bye. No.* But now he seemed to be saying them less often. Kay's anxious eyes were assessing him all the time. His face seemed to have lost the quick expressions it once had. He paid so little heed to us that we suspected he might have truly gone deaf. We got his hearing tested, and although it was fine, Kay continued to worry. I'm the kind of guy who naturally thinks everything's going to be fine, and I told her to stop worrying. But she couldn't. After weeks of listening to her fret, I gave in.

"All right," I said. "Let's get him checked out. At least that will get everyone off our backs."

Before we took Austin in for testing, the doctor sent us assessment forms to fill out. As Kay went through the speech and language questions, she realized how much we had failed to notice. Words that Austin had once used—*ball, dog, water*—had disappeared entirely from his vocabulary.

"When did your child begin putting words together?" we read on the assessment form.

He hadn't yet. Not even two words. When Austin wanted something, he pointed or pulled us toward whatever he wanted. When we couldn't understand him, he cried and threw tantrums.

As we sat in the specialist's waiting room a few days after Austin had completed the comprehensive battery of tests, I was planning the grief I'd give Kay's family when the tests showed our son to be perfectly fine. As we walked into the doctor's office, I expected to hear that Austin's speech was a little delayed, which is common in boys, and that he'd grow out of it.

Kay joked with the doctor as we shook his hand. "So, you're going to tell me that I feed him too much sugar, aren't you?"

The doctor didn't smile. Instead, he said, "Why don't you have a seat, and let's go over what we found."

Almost every test showed that Austin lagged far behind expectations. He had delays with language—both understanding and speech—and problems with motor skills and muscle tone. The doctor said our son had pervasive development disorder, which was often code for autism in those days. No one knew the cause of Austin's condition. Hoping for a silver lining, I asked, "Will he get better as he grows older?"

The doctor glanced up from the reports before him, looked at both of us, and said quietly, "He might get worse."

Nightmare visions of our future flashed before me—putting locks on the doors and windows to keep our son from running away, changing diapers on a grown man, having to subdue an adult who threw tantrums like a two-year-old. A dozen other possibilities, each worse than the one before, filled my mind.

As Kay and I walked toward the car, I regained a bit of my usual optimism. Things had turned out differently than we'd hoped. But problems are for solving. I had a good salary and medical insurance. I tried to cheer Kay up by reminding her that we still had a lot to be grateful for.

"Isn't it better for this to happen to us than to another family that doesn't have the love and resources we have?" I asked.

Kay wasn't with me on that one. Looking up toward a cloudless sky, she asked, "How can the sun be shining today?"

Once in the car, Kay began to cry—more than cry, actually. She began to sob like a child. I stared straight ahead, gripping the steering wheel until my fingers ached. A clock had begun ticking in my mind—the same clock that ticks in the mind of every parent with a child who has a disability. It marks off the minutes I have

left in this world before I die and leave my son without someone to take care of him.

The son we had when we walked into that doctor's office was gone, just as surely as if he'd stopped breathing and died. The people Kay and I once were had died too. We'd been among the lucky ones. A happy marriage. A stable income. Three healthy children. The present was good, and we'd had every reason to think the future would be even better.

Now everything was different. We had joined the ranks of parents whose fate evokes pity and fear. Someone sent us a poem that I later learned is often sent to parents of children born with a disability.

---

Disability isn't another country; it's another world.

---

Called "Welcome to Holland," the poem is written from the perspective of a person who has his heart set on visiting Paris and spends months in joyous anticipation and planning. But his plane is diverted to Holland instead. After his initial disappointment, the traveler learns to appreciate what Holland has to offer that Paris doesn't—tulips, windmills, Rembrandt.

The poem was sent to comfort us. It didn't.

We weren't in another country; we were in another world. We'd expected to land on Earth, but we'd ended up on Mars—an arid, desolate, lonely world where nothing relating to our son would ever be easy again. We'd struggle in ways others wouldn't be able to imagine, and we'd be judged by people who couldn't possibly understand our situation. Restaurants, shops, theaters—all the places we'd once enjoyed with our children—would become sites of such anxiety when our son was present that we would stay away. Friends who had once welcomed us and our children would now reassess their invitations. If you think people don't like it when you bring your dog to their house, try bringing your autistic child.



We were given Austin's diagnosis on Ash Wednesday. Two nights later, at the Good Friday service, Kay sang with a septet during the evening service. As she stood at the front of the church, with the cross before her and the baptismal font behind her, she sang her heart out. There was only one question on her heart: *God, what have you called us to?*

We blamed ourselves; we blamed factors outside ourselves. But we never blamed God. Even so, we didn't understand why this was happening. If God had some grand design in sending us Austin, we couldn't see it. All we could see was the back of the quilt—the mess of loose ends and tied-off threads you find on the homely undersides of old-fashioned quilts. If he was using us to piece together a brilliant pattern, it was facing away from us, far from our own line of vision.

Kay and I began to scrutinize our pasts for anything we might have done that could have caused harm to our son. In the years to come, we would hear that mothers of children with autism were once blamed for not giving their babies the early nurturing they needed. Refrigerator mothers, they'd been called. Had we neglected Austin when he was a baby? No. Not intentionally—never. Kay adored and enjoyed our children, even under the most trying of circumstances. She'd nursed Austin until he was a year old. He'd been a normal, affectionate baby.

Then he changed. At one point we read that some people blame immunizations for autism. We retraced our steps and concluded that Austin had begun losing his language at about the same time he got his immunizations. Should we have skipped the immunizations? The research indicated there was no direct link to autism, but we were scrounging for answers.

NO GREATNESS WITHOUT GOODNESS

We had no idea what lay ahead. In my grade school *Weekly Reader*, I'd read about Dag Hammarskjöld, the secretary general of the United Nations. Then, years later, I heard a simple but beautiful prayer he wrote. It had sunk into the cobwebs of my mind until the day of the doctor's visit, when it burst to the surface. The next morning I went into my office, found the prayer, printed it out, and pinned it on my cubicle wall, where I saw it every time I sat down at my desk. It was the best expression of hope I could muster.

---

For all that has been, thank you. For all that will be, yes.