Steve Jobs created much of what I consider a personal computer part as I know it today. His name is on over 342 United States patents, with all sorts of recognizable technologies including user interfaces, mice, keyboards, speakers, and everything you probably love about your computer today. Arguably, you could consider most modern operating systems including Windows and Linux to have borrowed heavily from Steve’s ideas and technology developed for the Macintosh computer. Later in his career and return to Apple, Steve jobs pioneered the first modern smartphone, and before that the iPod which revolutionized a generation of music and storage capabilities. Steve Jobs made hardware and software sleek and functional, while reducing the barriers to learning technology and making it ergonomic and attractive.

Steve Jobs is an influential icon to just about everyone. But so much more to me as a young child. Before I even knew who he was, I knew I loved everything about my Apple Macintosh computer and the wonders of discovery it opened up to me. I played my first game, making my first video in Final Cut Pro, my first website in Adobe GoLive, or editing my first photo in Photoshop. While arguably Macs were not the best platform for developing some of the computer skills I would want to learn later in life such as putting computer components together to make a ‘PC’, I do not think I would’ve had the same interest and love of technology if I had not started on a Mac.

Once I knew who Steve Jobs was, and saw the competition (my friends owned a PC that booted up DOS, and eventually Windows XP) I began to genuinely appreciate the genius applied to the Macintosh. I bought my first iMac with my savings when I was 12 in order to play Blizzard games and use the computer for schoolwork. I eventually began using it to make videos and all sorts of media, as well as consume music. I followed Steve Jobs’ keynotes, and I saw him debut the iPod. I loved it, and I bought one as soon as I could. I used it all the time for audio books and music at work.

Everything Apple built was based on principles Steve Jobs applied in his personal life and his personal values.

Minimalism – When I think of minimalism epitomized through Steve Jobs, I think of the single click mouse. Was it a good idea? Probably not for serious users. But the UI didn’t need it, and it reduced barriers for entry for new computers. One could argue it was the computer that we needed to get people into using computers. Negative space was not a crime for Steve Jobs. The physical buttons, the OS, and the software all was minimalist and Steve Jobs applied this from his personal life where he often owned almost no physical possessions other than those he absolutely needed.

Simplicity – Not only were the options or buttons minimal, but the design itself was clean, and simple. It made the OS, physical hardware, and programs very simple to use and to figure out. There weren’t unnecessary steps. Everything worked together and just clicked. There were included programs for all basic functions so you did not need to download a bunch of 3rd party software to make it work. Most devices had ‘all-in-one’ designs so you didn’t need external monitors, speakers, or webcams on most models. It was clean and *everything* was simple.

Balance – The products built by Steve Jobs were versatile. There was no ‘right way’ to use it, it was designed for creative people who would then use the product to create something new, or use it in a way that maybe it wasn’t fully designed for. It was designed for the user, not an end result, and thus was balanced to be versatile in many situations. Price was the only ‘disadvantage’ or limitation to how much you could do with it.

Aesthetic Appeal - The product didn’t just need to be functional. It needed to be attractive, beautiful. With the iPhone, I believe this is why it took off and became a status symbol for Apple, which after Steve Jobs passed away, would become a trillion dollar company.