

Stay Hungry Stay Foolish

I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. Truth be told, I never graduated from college. And this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first 6 months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife. Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: "We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?" They said: "Of course." My biological mother later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college. This was a start in my life.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked far more interesting.

It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned coke bottles for the 5 cent deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces

or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backwards ten years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. Because believing that these dots would connect down the road will give you the confidence to follow your heart even when it leads you off the well-worn path and that will make all the difference.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees. We just released our finest creation — the Macintosh — a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down — that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me — I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over. I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking and don't settle. As with all matters of

the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking. Don't settle.

My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and thankfully I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog,

which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960's, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors, and polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: it was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of The Whole Earth Catalog, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.

Thank you all very much.

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我今天很荣幸能和你们一起参加毕业典礼，斯坦福大学是世界上最好的大学之一，而我至今尚未从大学中毕业。说实话，这也许是我生命中离大学毕业最近的一天了。今天，我想告诉你们我生命中的三段经历，并非什么了不得的大事件，只是三个小故事而已。

生命充满因缘际会。

我在里德大学呆了 6 个月就退学了，但之后仍作为旁听生混了 18 个月后才最终离开。故事要从我出生之前说起。我的生母是一名年轻的未婚妈妈，我出生时她还在读研究生，于是决定把我送给其他人收养。她坚持我应该被一对念过大学的夫妇收养，所以我出生的时候，她已经为我被一名律师和他的太太收养做好了万全的准备。但在最后一刻，这对夫妇改变了收养一名男孩的主意。这时候选名单上的另外一对夫妇，也就是我的养父母决定收养我。但事后，我的生母才发现养母根本就没有从大学毕业，而养父甚至连高中都没有毕业，所以她拒绝签署最后的收养文件，直到几个月后，我的养父母保证会把我送大学，她的态度才有所转变。

17 岁那年，我愚蠢地选择了一所几乎和斯坦福大学一样贵的学校。我父母处于蓝领阶层，他们几乎把所有积蓄都花在了我的学费上面。6 个月之后，我发现自己完全不知道这样念下去究竟有什么用，所以决定退学。当时做这个决定的时候我其实是非常害怕的，现在回头去看，这是我一生所作出的最正确的决定之一。从我退学的那一刻起，我就再也不用去上那些我毫无兴趣的必修课了，并且开始旁听那些看起来比较有意思的科目。

但是这并不是那么罗曼蒂克。因为自己没有宿舍，我只能睡在朋友房间的地板上；我去捡 5 美分的可乐瓶子，仅仅为了填饱肚子；在星期天的晚上，我需要走 7 英里的路程，穿过整个城市，只是为了能吃上饭——这个星期惟一一顿好一点的饭。但是我喜欢这样。我跟着我的直觉和好奇心走，遇到了很多东西，此后被证明是无价之宝。

由于已经退学，不用再去上那些常规的课程，于是我选择了一个书法班，想学学怎样才能写出一手漂亮字。在这个班上，我学习了各种衬线和无衬线字体，改变不同字体组合间距的方法，以及如何做出漂亮的版式。那是一种科学永远无法捕捉的充满美感、历史感和艺术感的微妙事物，这太有意思了。

当时，我压根儿没想到这些知识在我的生命中会有什么实际运用价值。但是 10 年之后，当我们设计第一款 **Macintosh** 电脑的时候，这些东西全排上了用场。我把当时我学的那些东西全都设计进了 **Mac**。那是第一台使用了漂亮印刷字体的电脑。如果我当时没有退学，就不会有机会去参加这个我感兴趣的美术字课程，**Mac** 也就不会有这么多丰富的字体，以及赏心悦目的字体间距。现在个人电脑就不会有现在这些美妙的字型了。当我 10 年后回望当初这一切因缘际会时，真觉得生命非常神奇。

当然，人不可能充满预见地将生命的点滴串联起来；只有在回头看的时候，你才会发现这些点点滴滴之间的联系。所以，一定要坚信，你现在所经历的将在你未来的生命中串联起来。你必须相信某些东西：自己的直觉，命运，勇气，因缘际会……正是这些信仰，让我不会失去希望，也让我的人生变得与众不同。

在挫折面前不要停下脚步

我的第二个故事关于爱与死亡。

我是幸运的，在年轻的时候就知道了自己爱做什么。20 岁的时候，我同斯蒂夫·沃兹尼亚克在我父母的车库里开创了苹果电脑公司。我们非常勤奋地工作。只用了 10 年时间，由两个穷光蛋组成的公司就扩展成拥有 4000 名员工的“庞然大物”，价值也达到 20 亿美金。在公司成立的第 9 年，刚推出了我们最好的产品——**Macintosh** 电脑，当时我刚过而立之年。

然后，我就被炒了鱿鱼。

一个人怎么可以被他所创立的公司解雇呢？随着苹果的成长，我们雇用了一个很有天分的人和我一起管理这家公司，在头一年，我们配合默契。但后来，我们对公司未来的前景出现了分歧，于是两人之间出现了矛盾。而公司的董事会站在他那一边，所以在 30 岁的时候，我被踢出了局。

在头几个月，我真不知道要做什么。我成了人人皆知的失败者，也让与我一同创业的人很沮丧，我甚至想过逃离硅谷。但曙光渐渐出现，我发现自己还是喜欢曾经做过的那些事情。虽然被抛弃了，但热忱不改。所以我决定，重新开始！虽然当时没有看出来，但事实证明，被苹果开掉是我这一生所经历过的最棒的事情。因为，一个成功者的极乐感觉被一个创业者的轻松感觉重新代替，我对任何事情都不那么特别看重。这让我觉得无比自由，我的生命进入了一个最有创造力的阶段。

在接下来的 5 年里，我开创了 **NeXT** 公司和 **Pixar** 公司，并且结识了后来成为我妻子的曼妙女郎劳伦斯。**Pixar** 制作了世界上第一部完全数码制作的电影——《玩具总动员 2》，现在这家公司是世界上最成功的动画制作公司之一。后来经历一系列的事件，苹果买下了 **NeXT**，于是我又回到了苹果，我们在 **NeXT** 研发出的技术成为推动苹果复兴的核心动力之一。我和劳伦斯也拥有了美满的家庭生活。

我非常肯定，如果没有被苹果炒掉，这一切都不可能在我身上发生。生活有时候就像一块板砖拍向你的脑袋，但不要丧失信心。热爱所从事的工作，是一直支持我不断前进的惟一理由。你得找出你的最爱，

对工作如此，对爱人亦是如此。如果你到现在还没有找到这样一份工作，那么就继续找。伟大的工作只会在岁月的酝酿中越陈越香。所以，在你终有所获之前，不要停下你寻觅的脚步。不要停下！

把每一天当作生命的终点。

在 17 岁那年，我读过一句格言，大概是：“如果你把每一天都当成生命里的最后一天，你将在某一天发现原来一切皆在掌握之中。”这句话从读到之日起，就对我产生了深远的影响。在过去 33 年里，我每天早晨都对着镜子问自己：“如果今天是我生命中的最后一天，我还愿意做我今天原本应该做的事情吗？”当一连好多天答案都是否定的时候，我就知道做出改变的时刻到了。

所有的事情在面对死亡的时候，都将烟消云散，只留下真正重要的东西。在我所知道的各种方法中，提醒自己即将死去也是避免掉入“畏惧失去”这个陷阱的最好办法。而且这个方法能让你直面自己的内心。人赤条条地来，赤条条地走，没有理由不听你内心的呼唤。

大约一年前，我被诊断出癌症。在早晨 7：30 我做了一个检查，扫描结果清楚地显示我的胰脏出现了一个肿瘤。我当时甚至不知道胰脏究竟是什么。医生告诉我，几乎可以确定这是一种不治之症，顶多还能活 3 至 6 个月。大夫建议我回家，把诸事安排妥当，这是医生对临终病人的标准用语。这意味着我得把今后 10 年要对子女说的话用几个月的时间说完；这还意味着向众人告别的时间到了。

我整天和那个诊断书一起生活。直到有一天早上医生给我做了一个切片检查。我使用了镇静剂，太太在旁边陪着我。结果，大夫们从显微镜下观察了细胞组织之后，惊讶得集体尖叫了起来。因为那是一种非常罕见的，可以通过手术治疗的胰脏癌。

这是我最接近死亡的一次，在经历了这次与死神擦肩而过的经验之后，死亡对于我来说只是一项有效的判断工具，并且只是一个纯粹的理性概念。虽然我能够更肯定地告诉你们：没人想死；即使想去天堂的人，也是希望能够活着进去。

你们还是新生代，但不久的将来你们也将逐渐老去，被送出人生的舞台。很抱歉说得这么富有戏剧性，但生命就是如此。你们的时间有限，所以不要把时间浪费在重复其他人的生活上。不要让他人的观点所发出的噪音淹没自己内心的声音。最为重要的是，要有遵从自己内心和直觉的勇气，它们可能已经知道你其实想成为一个什么样的人。其他事物都是次要的。

在我年轻的时候，有一本非常棒的杂志叫《全球目录》。这本杂志的创办人是一个叫斯图尔特·布兰德的家伙，他把这本杂志办得充满诗意，但可惜寿命不长。那是在 70 年代中期，我当时正处在你们现在的年龄。在这本杂志最后一期的封底，有一张清晨乡间公路的照片，非常赏心悦目。如果你喜欢搭车冒险旅行的话，经常会碰到这种小路。在照片下面有一排字：“保持饥饿，保持愚蠢。”这是他们停刊的告别留言。我总是以此自省。现在，在你们毕业开始新生活的时候，我把这句话也送给你们。

请保持饥饿，保持愚蠢吧