

Lucky people don't just pay attention to the world around them and meet interesting individuals; they also find unusual ways to use and recombine their knowledge and experiences. Most people have remarkable resources at their fingertips but never figure out how to leverage them. However, lucky people appreciate the value of their knowledge and their network, and tap into these gold mines as needed.

Here's a powerful example from the 2005 commencement address that Steve Jobs delivered at Stanford. In short, he dropped out of college after six months because he wasn't sure why he was there, and the tuition was much more than his parents could afford. Here's how Steve tells it:

*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. 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.*

This story emphasizes that you never know when your experiences will prove to be valuable. Steve Jobs was open-minded and curious about the world, collected diverse experiences independent of their short-term benefits, and was able to tap into his knowledge in unexpected ways. This is a sharp reminder that the more experiences you have and the broader your base of knowledge, the more resources you have from which to draw.