



## **15 Lessons From Steve Jobs**

### **1. Do what you love.**

Jobs once said, “People with passion can change the world for the better.” Asked about the advice he would offer would-be entrepreneurs, he said, “I’d get a job as a busboy or something until I figured out what I was really passionate about.” That’s how much it meant to him. Passion is everything.

### **2. Put a dent in the universe.**

Jobs believed in the power of vision. He once asked then-Pepsi President, John Sculley, “Do you want to spend your life selling sugar water or do you want to change the world?” Don’t lose sight of the big vision. Of course it would later turn out to be the most challenging decision of his career. Though some may see it in a bad way, we might not have seen the real Apple if Steve was not hungry enough to fight back what he had owned and created.

### **3. Make connections.**

Jobs once said creativity is connecting things. He meant that people with a broad set of life experiences can often see things that others miss. He took calligraphy classes that didn’t have any practical use in his life — until he built the Macintosh. Jobs travelled to India and

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Asia. He studied design and hospitality. Don't live in a bubble. Connect ideas from different fields.

#### **4. Say no to 1,000 things.**

Jobs was as proud of what Apple chose not to do as he was of what Apple did. When he returned in Apple in 1997, he took a company with 350 products and reduced them to 10 products in a two-year period. Why? So he could put the "A-Team" on each product. What are you saying "no" to?

#### **5. Create insanely different experiences.**

Jobs also sought innovation in the customer-service experience. When he first came up with the concept for the Apple Stores, he said they would be different because instead of just moving boxes, the stores would enrich lives. Everything about the experience you have when you walk into an Apple store is intended to enrich your life and to create an emotional connection between you and the Apple brand. What are you doing to enrich the lives of your customers?

#### **6. Master the message.**

You can have the greatest idea in the world, but if you can't communicate your ideas, it doesn't matter. Jobs was the world's greatest corporate storyteller. Instead of simply delivering a presentation like most people do, he informed, he educated, he inspired and he entertained, all in one presentation.

#### **7. Sell dreams, not products.**

Jobs captured our imagination because he really understood his customer. He knew that tablets would not capture our imaginations if they were too complicated. The result, a button in front of an iPad. It's that simple, a 2-year-old can use it. Your customers don't care about your product. They care about themselves, their hopes, their ambitions. Jobs taught us that if you help your customers reach their dreams, you'll win them over.

#### **8. Never fear failure**

Jobs was fired by the successor he picked. It was one of the most public embarrassments of the last 30 years in business. Yet, he didn't become a venture capitalist never to be heard from again. He didn't start a production company and do a lot of lunches. He picked himself up and got back to work following his passion. Eight years ago, he was diagnosed with

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pancreatic cancer and told he only had a few weeks to live. As Samuel Johnson said, there's nothing like your impending death to focus the mind.

***From Jobs' 2005 Stanford commencement speech:***

"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 importantly, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

**9. You can't connect the dots forward – only backward**

This is another gem from the 2005 Stanford speech. The idea behind the concept is that, as much as we try to plan our lives ahead in advance, there's always something that's completely unpredictable about life. What seems like bitter anguish and defeat in the moment — getting dumped by a girlfriend, not getting that job at McKinsey, "wasting" 4 years of your life on a start-up that didn't pan out as you wanted — can turn out to sow the seeds of your unimaginable success years from now. You can't be too attached to how you think your life is supposed to work out and instead trust that all the dots will be connected in the future. This is all part of the plan.

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. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

**10. Listen to your instinct**

Most of us don't hear a voice inside our heads. We've simply decided that we're going to work in finance or be a doctor because that's what our parents told us we should do or because we wanted to make a lot of money. When we consciously or unconsciously make that decision, we snuff out that little voice in our head. From then on, most of us put it on automatic pilot. We mail it in. You have met these people. They're nice people. But they're not changing the world. Jobs has always been a restless soul. A man in a hurry. A man with a plan. His plan isn't for everyone. It was his plan. He wanted to build computers. Some people have a voice that tells them to fight for democracy. Some have one that tells

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them to become an expert in miniature spoons. When Jobs first saw an example of a Graphical User Interface — a GUI — he knew this was the future of computing and that he had to create it. That became the Macintosh. Whatever your voice is telling you, you would be smart to listen to it. Even if it tells you to quit your job, or move to China, or leave your partner.

#### **11. Expect a lot from yourself and others**

We have heard stories of Steve Jobs yelling or dressing down staff. He's a control freak, we've heard – a perfectionist. The bottom line is that he is in touch with his passion and that little voice in the back of his head. He gives a damn. He wants the best from himself and everyone who works for him. If they don't give a damn, he doesn't want them around. And yet — he keeps attracting amazing talent around him. Why? Because talent gives a damn too. There's a saying: if you're a "B" player, you'll hire "C" players below you because you don't want them to look smarter than you. If you're an "A" player, you'll hire "A+" players below you, because you want the best result.

#### **12. Don't care about being right. Care about succeeding.**

Jobs used this line in an interview after he was fired by Apple. If you have to steal others' great ideas to make yours better, do it. You can't be married to your vision of how a product is going to work out, such that you forget about current reality. When the Apple III came out, it was hot and warped its motherboard even though Jobs had insisted it would be quiet and sleek. If Jobs had stuck with Lisa, Apple would have never developed the Mac.

#### **13. Find the most talented people to surround yourself with.**

There is a misconception that Apple is Steve Jobs. Everyone else in the company is a faceless minion working to please the all-seeing and all-knowing Jobs. In reality, Jobs has surrounded himself with talent: Phil Schiller, Jony Ive, Peter Oppenheimer, Tim Cook, the former head of stores Ron Johnson. These are all super-talented people who don't get the credit they deserve. The fact that Apple's stock price has been so strong since Jobs left as CEO is a credit to the strength of the team. Jobs has hired bad managerial talent before. John Sculley ended up firing Jobs and — according to Jobs — almost killing the company. Give credit to Jobs for learning from this mistake and realizing that he can't do anything without great talent around him.

#### **14. Stay hungry, stay foolish**

*Again from the end of Jobs' memorable Stanford speech:*

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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 1960s, 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.

### **15. Anything is possible through hard work, determination, and a sense of vision**

Although he's the greatest CEO ever and the father of the modern computer, at the end of the day, Steve Jobs is just a guy. He's a husband, a father, a friend — like you and me. We can be just as special as he is — if we learn his lessons and start applying them in our lives. When Jobs returned to Apple in the 1990s, it was weeks away from bankruptcy. It's now the biggest company in the world. Anything's possible in life if you continue to follow the simple lessons laid out above.

### **Summary**

There's one story that I think sums up Jobs' career at Apple. An executive who had the job of reinventing the Disney Store once called up Jobs and asked for advice. His answer? Dream bigger. I think that's the best advice he could leave us with. See genius in your craziness, believe in yourself, believe in your vision, and be constantly prepared to defend those ideas.

*May you change the world.*

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