

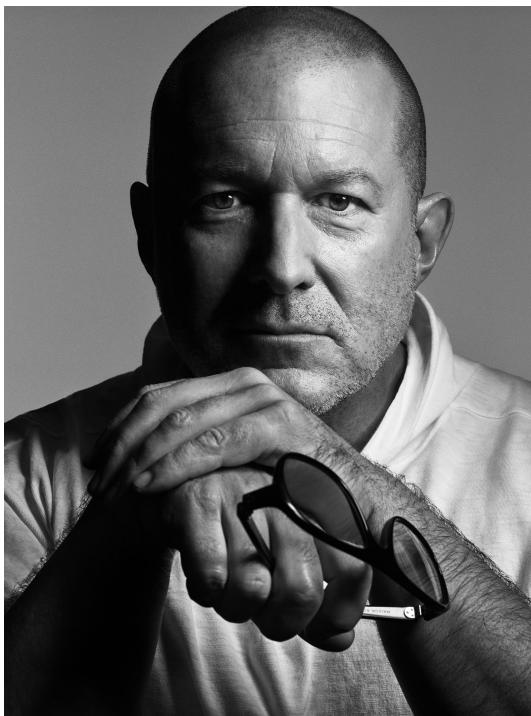
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Jony Ive on What He Misses Most About Steve Jobs

On the 10th anniversary of Steve Jobs's death, Sir Jony Ive reflects on their collaborations and friendship: "My understanding of him refuses to remain cozy or still."



"I think about Steve every day," Jony Ive writes about his late friend Steve Jobs. "He was without doubt the most inquisitive human I have ever met."

PHOTO: CRAIG MCDEAN

By Jony Ive

Oct. 4, 2021 9:45 am ET

Editor's note: Following Steve Jobs's death on October 5, 2011, Jony Ive delivered a eulogy in which he referred to the chairman and co-founder of Apple as "my closest and my most loyal friend." Ive, who later left his post as chief design officer at Apple and went on to launch the creative collective LoveFrom, wrote this remembrance in which he reflects on his memories of Jobs's last day, the spirit of their collaboration, his friendship with Jobs's wife, Laurene Powell Jobs, and why his late friend continues to "evade a simple place in my memory."

I have barely thought about Steve's death.

My memories of that brutal, heartbreak day 10 years ago are scattered and random. I cannot remember driving down to his house. I do remember a hazy October sky and shoes that were too tight. I remember afterwards Tim and I sat quietly in the garden together for a long time.

Since giving Steve's eulogy I have not spoken publicly about our friendship, our adventures or our collaboration. I never read the flurry of cover stories, obituaries or the bizarre mischaracterizations that have slipped into folklore.

But I think about Steve every day.

Laurene and I are close. Our families have been close for nearly 30 years. We have endured deaths and celebrated births. We talk all the time, often about Steve but rarely about my work with him. Mostly, we talk about the future and her extraordinary and inspiring work with Emerson Collective.

"I loved how [Steve] saw the world. The way he thought was profoundly beautiful."

When her brilliant and inquisitive children ask me about their dad I just cannot help myself. I can talk happily for hours describing the remarkable man I loved so deeply.

We worked together for nearly 15 years. We had lunch together most days and spent our afternoons in the sanctuary of the design studio. Those were some of the happiest, most creative and joyful times of my life.

I loved how he saw the world. The way he thought was profoundly beautiful.

He was without doubt the most inquisitive human I have ever met. His insatiable curiosity was not limited or distracted by his knowledge or expertise, nor was it casual or passive. It was ferocious, energetic and restless. His curiosity was practiced with intention and rigor.

Many of us have an innate predisposition to be curious. I believe that after a traditional education, or working in an environment with many people, curiosity is a decision requiring intent and discipline.

In larger groups our conversations gravitate towards the tangible, the measurable. It is more comfortable, far easier and more socially acceptable talking about what is known. Being curious and exploring tentative ideas were far more important to Steve than being socially acceptable.

Our curiosity begs that we learn. And for Steve, wanting to learn was far more important than wanting to be right.



Jony Ive in conversation with Steve Jobs in 2005. "[Steve] had such a deep understanding and reverence for the creative process," Ive writes. "He understood creating should be afforded rare respect."

PHOTO: ART STREIBER/AUGUST

Our curiosity united us. It formed the basis of our joyful and productive collaboration. I think it also tempered our fear of doing something terrifyingly new.

Steve was preoccupied with the nature and quality of his own thinking. He expected so much of himself and worked hard to think with a rare vitality, elegance and discipline. His rigor and tenacity set a dizzyingly high bar. When he could not think satisfactorily he would complain in the same way I would complain about my knees.

As thoughts grew into ideas, however tentative, however fragile, he recognized that this was hallowed ground. He had such a deep understanding and reverence for the creative process. He understood creating should be afforded rare respect—not only when the ideas were good or the circumstances convenient.

Ideas are fragile. If they were resolved, they would not be ideas, they would be products. It takes determined effort not to be consumed by the problems of a new idea. Problems are easy to articulate and understand, and they take the oxygen. Steve focused on the actual ideas, however partial and unlikely.

I had thought that by now there would be reassuring comfort in the memory of my best friend and creative partner, and of his extraordinary vision.

But of course not. Ten years on, he manages to evade a simple place in my memory. My understanding of him refuses to remain cozy or still. It grows and evolves.

Perhaps it is a comment on the daily roar of opinion and the ugly rush to judge, but now, above all else, I miss his singular and beautiful clarity. Beyond his ideas and vision, I miss his insight that brought order to chaos.

It has nothing to do with his legendary ability to communicate but everything to do with his obsession with simplicity, truth and purity.

“[Steve] truly believed that by making something useful, empowering and beautiful, we express our love for humanity.”

Ultimately, I believe it speaks to the underlying motivation that drove him. He was not distracted by money or power, but driven to tangibly express his love and appreciation of our species.

He truly believed that by making something useful, empowering and beautiful, we express our love for humanity.

When Steve left Apple in the eighties, he called his new company NeXT. He was very good at names.

After nearly 30 years, I left Apple, driven by my curiosity to learn and discover new ways to make a useful contribution. It is Steve's powerful motivation that informed the name of my next adventure, LoveFrom.

While I am absurdly fortunate that I still collaborate with my dear friends at Apple, I am also terribly lucky that I get to explore and create with some new friends.

Laurene and I at last are working together. In truth, we have been working together for decades.



Jony Ive and Laurene Powell Jobs, photographed on September 25, 2021. "Laurene and I at last are working together," writes Ive, founder of the creative collective LoveFrom. "In truth, we have been working together for decades."

PHOTO: CRAIG MCDEAN

Steve's last words to me were that he would miss talking together. I was sitting on the floor next to his bed, my back against the wall.

After he died, I walked out into the garden. I remember the sound of the latch on the wooden door as I gently pulled it closed.

In the garden, I sat and thought how talking often gets in the way of listening and thinking. Perhaps that is why so much of our time together was spent quietly.

I miss Steve desperately and I will always miss not talking with him.

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