

## TIM COOK : BE A BUILDER

### Context:

"Good morning. Today I will be performing 'Be a Builder,' a commencement address delivered by Apple CEO Tim Cook at Stanford University in 2019. Speaking at a time when the tech industry faced immense scrutiny over privacy and ethics, Cook used this platform to challenge graduates to take responsibility for what they build. More personally, he shared the visceral struggle of succeeding a legend like Steve Jobs, offering a roadmap for finding one's own path and vision in the face of impossible expectations."

### Speech:

If you want to take credit, first learn to take responsibility.

"Whatever you do with your life, be a builder.

You don't have to start from scratch to build something monumental. Builders are comfortable in the belief that their life's work will one day be bigger than them—bigger than any one person. They're mindful that its effects will span generations. That's not an accident. In a way, it's the whole point.

Being a builder is about believing that you cannot possibly be the greatest cause on this Earth, because you aren't built

to last. It's about making peace with the fact that you won't be there for the end of the story.

That brings me to my last bit of advice. Fourteen years ago, Steve Jobs stood on this stage and told your predecessors: 'Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.' Here is my corollary: 'Your mentors may leave you prepared, but they can't leave you ready.'

When Steve got sick, I had hardwired my thinking to the belief that he would get better. I was convinced, down to my core, that he'd still be guiding Apple long after I, myself, was gone. But one day, he called me over to his house and told me that it wasn't going to be that way.

And when he was gone, truly gone, I learned the real, visceral difference between preparation and readiness. It was the loneliest I've ever felt in my life. It was one of those moments where you can be surrounded by people, yet you don't really see, hear, or even feel them. But I could sense their expectations.

When the dust settled, all I knew was that I was going to have to be the best version of myself that I could be. I knew that if you got out of bed every morning and set your watch by what other people expect or demand, it'll drive you crazy.

So what was true then is true now. Don't waste your time living someone else's life. Don't try to emulate the people who came before you to the exclusion of everything else,

contorting into a shape that doesn't fit. It takes too much mental effort—effort that should be dedicated to creating and building.

Graduates, the fact is, when your time comes, and it will, you'll never be ready. But you're not supposed to be. Find the hope in the unexpected. Find the courage in the challenge. Find your vision on the solitary road. Don't get distracted."