

Connecting the Dots



Steve Jobs (1955-2011) was an American entrepreneur, business magnate, inventor and industrial designer. He was the Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Apple Inc. He is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of the microcomputer revolution of the 1970s and 1980s.

- **dropped out of** : discontinued, left
- **drop in** : visitor
- ◆ *What did Steve Jobs do for two years after he joined Reed College?*
- **dorm** : dormitory
- **cent** : a coin worth one hundredth of the US Dollar
- ◆ *What hardships did Jobs face?*
- **typography** : the appearance of printed matter
- **Mac** : Macintosh computer
- ◆ *What basic course in Reed College helped Jobs while designing the Mac?*
- **connect the dots** : associate one idea (previous to another (next) to find/create a new big picture.

Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. 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 before I really quit. Looking back, it was one of the best decisions I ever made. I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.

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 seven 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. Here's one example : Reed College offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Because I had to take a calligraphy class, I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about what makes great **typography** great.

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**. If I had never dropped in on that course in college the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or for that matter even proportionally spaced fonts.

And since Windows just copied Mac, it's likely no personal computer would have them. Of course it was impossible to **connect the dots** looking forward

when I was in college. But it was very clear looking backwards 10 years later.

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 some things – your **gut**, destiny, life, *karma*, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My second story is about love and loss. I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz (Steve Wozniak) and I started Apple when I was 20. In 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company. And then **I got fired**. It was **devastating**.

But something slowly **began to dawn on** me – I still loved what I did. And so I decided to start over.

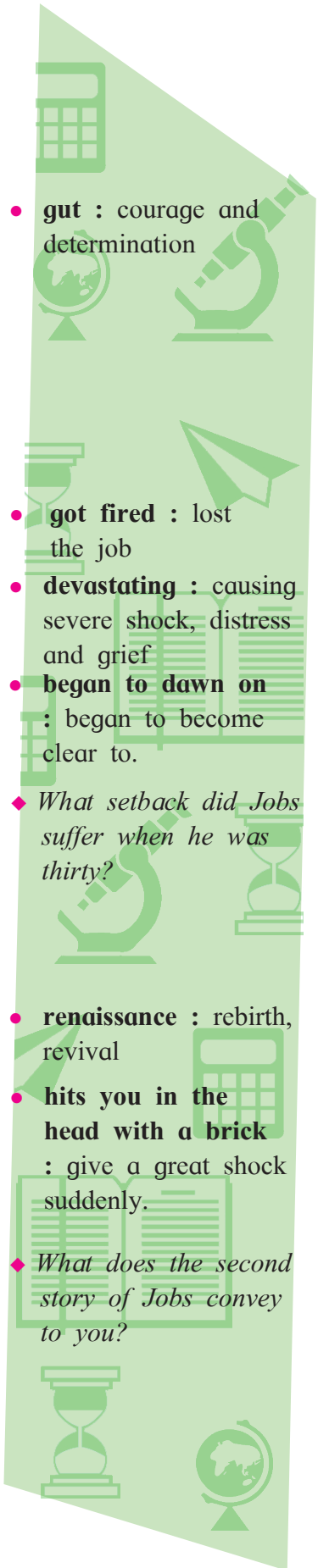
The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company Next, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar is now the world's most successful animation studio, 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.

Sometimes life **hits you in the head with a brick**. Don't lose faith. The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle.

My third story is about death.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for 'prepare to die'. I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy. It turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.



- **gut** : courage and determination

- **got fired** : lost the job

- **devastating** : causing severe shock, distress and grief

- **began to dawn on** : began to become clear to.

- ◆ *What setback did Jobs suffer when he was thirty?*

- **renaissance** : rebirth, revival

- **hits you in the head with a brick** : give a great shock suddenly.

- ◆ *What does the second story of Jobs convey to you?*

◆ *What does Jobs warn you about life and dogma?*

- **dogma** : belief or a set of beliefs held by a group or organisation which others are expected to accept without argument
- **drown out** : be louder than another sound and prevent it from being heard
- **intuition** : instinctive understanding
- ◆ *How does Jobs close his address to the graduate students?*
- **anew** : in a new or different way
- **Stay Hungry** : Always keep wanting something more, something new.
- **Stay Foolish** : Always keep an open mind. Never think you know everything.

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 : 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 other's 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.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called *The Whole Earth Catalogue*. In the final issue, on the back cover they put a photograph of an early morning country road. Beneath it were the words : Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish. It was their farewell message as they signed off. I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin **anew**, I wish that for you. **Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish.**

– Steve Jobs

Here is a list of twenty amazing life lessons we can all learn from Steve Jobs :

- (1) Don't wait.
- (2) Make your own reality.
- (3) Control everything you can.
- (4) Own your mistakes.
- (5) Know yourself.
- (6) Leave the door open for the fantastic.
- (7) Don't hold back.
- (8) Surround yourself with brilliance.
- (9) Build a team of 'A' players.
- (10) Be yourself.
- (11) Be persuasive.
- (12) Show others the way.
- (13) Trust your instincts.
- (14) Take risks.
- (15) Follow Great with Great.
- (16) Make tough decisions.
- (17) Presentation can make a world of difference.
- (18) Find a way to balance your intensity.
- (19) Live for today.
- (20) Share your wisdom.