



STEVE JOBS - CONNECTING THE DOTS

Do you remember what your life was like in the era of BPC? BPC? That's Before Personal Computers, back in the 60's and '70's. Pads of paper, copious notes, electric typewriters, hand cranked adding machines and hard cover books filled with columns of handwritten numbers. There were hard wired telephones with rotary dials, checkbooks and fountain pens and banks you had to go into to make deposits and withdrawals. And cameras that required film, plus developing labs that took three or four days to process and print every negative on the roll. And then there was cash; seems we had to pay cash or write a check for everything we

bought.

Were they the good old days? Perhaps for some they were, but what a challenge it would be today if we had to return to those same procedures now. As for me I wouldn't be able to create Upward Bound without my computer. The entire process of writing and producing Upward Bound Journal is done on my personal computer, at my desk, at home, including photo editing and printing these color filled pages.

More than anyone else, two people made personal computing a dominant part of our lives, Steve Jobs of Apple and Bill Gates of Microsoft. Gates, the left-brained code writer and Jobs, a true right-brained visionary.

Steve Jobs, the creative inventor of Apple computers, died just a few days ago and the world has been exposed to details of his life we hadn't known much about before now. Jobs gave a few people a pretty good hint a couple of years ago when he addressed the graduating class of Stanford University. And his life story demonstrated several lessons that are important for all of us to learn. For all his success Jobs' life held some major challenges and his awareness of their value provided him great insight, and is worth sharing with you.

His birth mother was an unwed graduate student who chose to put her child up for adoption, but only to a college educated couple. Yet when he was born the couple backed out saying they wanted a girl not a boy, and another couple, neither with any formal education opted-in instead. But only after they agreed to send the baby to college did Jobs' birth mother agree to sign the adoptive papers. Years later Steve entered Reed College, but dropped out

after six months because he couldn't see any value in it. He wasn't going to spend his parents' life savings on school when he didn't know what he wanted to do with his life or how this college would help him figure it out.

So he dropped out of school and all the required classes but started sitting in for free on classes he found intriguing, like Calligraphy. Years later, what he learned about beautiful type-faces and spacing between letters became a guiding influence on the design of the first Macintosh computer. Beautiful typography is one of the subtle reasons the Mac found such wide acceptance among their creative users. (It quickly became the computer of choice for everyone in editing and publishing.)

The challenge of coming from a hard working family made Steve sensitive to not waste his parents resources, but it also gave him freedom to pursue on his own what he would soon discover would be his passion.

From our perspective we can begin to see the Divine Hand of Inner Guidance lighting the way for his creative mind to find fulfillment. Jobs' said that in looking back he was able to connect the dots he had been unable to see when he dropped out of school. It made him also realize that he had to "trust in something – gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever." He said, "You have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future."

Those dots are there for all of us, all of the time. It's called Divine Order. In my own life's challenges it finally dawned on me that God has a divine plan for every one of us, a plan that includes every turn of events, whether the difficult challenges or the easy going opportunities, and all we have to do is open ourselves to His guidance. There's a reason for the events in our lives; they help us steer our course or get back on the path whenever we go astray.

God's plan connects the dots too obscure for us to see in the moment.

Metaphorically, this is how it works. Imagine God beholding the Tree of Life. The leaves are turning into bright and bold Autumn colors. They're magnificent. And as each leaf turns color God imprints a message describing a wonderful life plan on it. Just as those colorful leaves give the tree its incredible beauty, the one you pick for yourself will make your life just as beautiful. While you have no idea which leaf is yours, God does, and asks you to simply become willing to reach down and pick the one that falls at your feet. God will guide your hand and draw you to the leaf He made just for you. The plan is plainly written on the leaf, not for your eyes to see, but your heart to read and follow its guiding light.



Every plan has challenges, opportunities and rewards; they come with some uphill struggles and downhill sleigh rides. They come in the form of lessons to be learned and faith to be acquired. Each plan will help you grow and experience the fulfillment that makes your life worthwhile. We see examples everywhere, all the time when we open ourselves to being aware.

Steve Jobs created Apple computers in his parent's garage and in ten years grew the company to \$2 billion in sales and 4000 employees. But with the company's success came new management...and Steve was fired from his own company.

Instead of being devastated Steve slowly realized he needed his 'freedom' to start something new. With a lightness of spirit and filled with new creativity he started a company he named NeXT

and then another called Pixar, the animation studio that made Toy Story, now the most successful animation studio in the world. Then, suddenly, Apple bought NeXT and Steve was back at the helm, taking Apple to another level altogether with iPad's and iPhone's and a whole lot more.

Divine Order isn't the only lesson we can learn from Steve Jobs' life; his technical innovations and his untimely death from cancer provide two widely divergent examples of metaphysical principles worth examining.

One of our most popular expressions in Unity is: "thoughts are things." It's a simple powerful statement. Nothing in the world of human kind exists without being birthed by an imaginative thought. That's true of our physical world with clothing, shelter, and food, to transportation, entertainment and personal computers. First comes the idea in mind and then the physical attainment via the mental process of figuring out how to accomplish the idea. We build with our hands only what our mind conceives. (Mind... idea...expression!)

Man's earliest tools were sharp rocks used for hunting, food prep and making primitive garments. Today we have flash drives, touch screens and iPods with 5000 songs stored in a tiny box, which brings us back to Steve Jobs' and the lesson his life provides. He was certainly a techie, but even more he was a visionary. He saw in his mind's eye cell phones that were actually miniature computers that not only linked us all via cell phone towers, but were also tiny movie screens and touch responsive keyboards.

In his mind there were no limits to the possibilities of the creative expression of our imagination. Because we have a mind we can and do create anything and everything, with unlimited possibilities.

The mind is not limited to imagine only physical things; in the realm of metaphysics our thoughts create our life experience as well, whether good or bad, positive or negative, healthy or sick. Which brings us to another lesson Steve Jobs' life provides. While his imagination created some of the most incredible computer devices we have ever seen, his body became diseased with a cancer in his pancreas that took his life much earlier than it should have.

We don't know what brought on the cancer, but we can be sure that whatever the effect (cancer), there had to be an underlying cause. Metaphysical studies of the last two hundred years have demonstrated time and again that disease of any sort can result from negative thoughts and beliefs. Without diminishing the probability that environment, heredity and other worldly factors may have played a role in the root cause, we can't rule out that Steve's subconscious thoughts and beliefs were significant as well.

Since Steve was put up for adoption by his un-wed grad school parents back in the 1960's, not accepted by the pre-selected adoptive parents because he wasn't the girl they really wanted, it is quite likely that he grew up feeling doubly rejected, and at least partially unwanted and even inadequate. Those negative feelings deeply imbedded in his subconscious may very well have motivated him to excel on the one hand, and yet never feel he was good enough on the other. Negative self-beliefs can eat away at a person's insides, literally as well as figuratively.

Parents who instill in their children that they can do or accomplish anything they want in life, give them a gift of confidence and fill them with mountain-moving faith in themselves as well. Parents who chide their children that they are not good enough, whether they speak seriously or act like they are just 'teasing,' actually create a negative self-fulfilling prophecy far

more often than they motivate them to dig deeper or reach higher.

The thoughts that create our reality are the direct product of our beliefs, and our beliefs originate from our experiences, observations and what we are told by our parents and teachers. Anyone who is experiencing chronic illness or just plain 'bad luck' would do well to probe what they believe about themselves and the world around them. The most effective way to change one's life experiences is to change one's beliefs.

A father brought his son to Jesus for healing saying, 'if you can, have pity on us.' Jesus replied, "If you can? All things are possible to him who believes." And the father cried out, "I believe; help thou my unbelief." Jesus lifted the boy up and he was healed. (Mark 9:22-27)

The quickest way to turn negative beliefs to positive ones is to simply say repeatedly, "God is turning this to good!" Repeat until you believe it. Become aware of the thoughts that come as a reaction to the affirmation; bless them but let them go, and repeat "God is turning this to good!" one more time. When you reach a point where you know that those words are true, you have made the affirmation a new and positive belief, and your life will begin to change in positive ways you could never have imagined.

Steve Jobs' life provides a big lesson for all of us but very few will achieve the financial or corporate level of his success; for one thing the world doesn't need millions of computer development moguls. But the world does need millions of individuals who find and fulfill their dreams, especially the dreams of making the world just a little bit better place to live for everyone.

You and I are part of those millions. We each have a leaf on that tree with our name on it and a Divine Plan imbedded in it. It's ours, or it's our children's and grandchildren's. Life plans worth

pursuing and living...and worth meeting all the challenges that are attached to it.

In our circle of friends we know writers, insurance representatives, real estate agents, technicians, executives, hair stylists, military veterans, doctors and hard working stay-at-home moms. They are all pursuing paths unique to their lives and they all experience periods of success and challenging moments. Most of the time the challenges are met with determination and are overcome, taking them to another level. Occasionally the challenges are cause for redirection or starting over.

In my own life that redirection occurred several times. Looking back I can see that I needed a big change in my life, not a series of little ones. Commerce was not what was written on my 'leaf' but the ministry was and once I got that message my life has been Upward Bound ever since. What connected all the dots for me was all the experiences from my days in commerce that contributed to and enhanced my work in the ministry. Looking back it all makes sense, in fact it's almost miraculous – like someone (or something) was in charge at every turn and every stop light. Someone knew where I was going even though I didn't, then or even now.

That's the thing, we don't know exactly where life may be leading, and we don't have to know. That's why we have Faith and Trust and Confidence. And it's looking back on our lives, becoming aware of how all the dots are actually connected; recognizing the Divine guidance that gives Order to our lives that makes this whole experience unique and special for every single one of us. It is really so very simple; God connects the dots for us because God is in the dots.

God bless you,
Art & Dottie Holt

M E D I T A T I O N

MORNING MEDITATION

Relax and sit comfortably in your chair, take a deep breath, hold it momentarily, and as you let it out again, feel the presence of spirit assisting you to prepare for your day.

I am awake to God's Presence and all the exciting possibilities that await me as this day before me unfolds.

Jesus said, "I came that you may have life, and that you may have it abundantly." I accept, and into that abundance and fullness of life I now enter. In that fullness I am prepared to be all that God created me to be. I am open to experience love, joy and laughter; open to find success in all my endeavors; able to make the choices that are in complete harmony with my highest and best good.

God is with me and enables me to live my life fully and completely. I am open and receptive to experience God's living, loving Presence.

I accept myself and all others just the way we are. I forgive and let go of any old angers or resentments that may be interfering or keeping me from sharing love and harmony in all my relationships.

With God's presence I am able to elevate myself spiritually, emotionally, and physically. I am free of all pain, illness, or discomfort, and experience perfect health flowing in and through my body, now.

God's good continually flows into my life as greater happiness, increased prosperity, renewed health, and unlimited success.

Thank you, God, for Your abundant good!

And so it is...

Amen

EVENING MEDITATION

At the end of the day it is well to take a few moments to become centered before going to sleep. You will rest more completely and awake refreshed.

To begin: Breathe deeply, hold your breath momentarily, and release. Relax; "Peace, be still." Turn now to that quiet place within where you are one with God.

In the stillness, I let go and let God. I release my cares and the distractions of this day, and give thanks for the Divine Order and Harmony that has guided me today.

I let go and greet the night ahead with a willing heart. I know that in all things God goes before me to prepare the way; knowing before I ask what is for my highest good. As I let go, I am open and receptive to all the new ideas and Divine wisdom that will carry me through tomorrow.

As I let go, I am able to rest my body and mind. I see my life with a new perspective and move forward in an orderly way, finding both time and energy to do all that needs to be done by me. I am empowered to reach greater heights as I let go and let God, for I am God-centered and in the flow of His Will and His Works for me now and in the days to come.

"I give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever!" (Psalms 107:1).

Thank you, God for hearing my prayer. I am humbly thankful for the restful night into which I enter now.

And so it is...

Amen

WORDS WE LIVE BY

Our words create our reality. Let us acknowledge another word that will impact our lives in wonderful ways. Our word is...Serenity

When we hear the word Serenity many of us think of the Serenity Prayer associated with AA: *“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”* It’s a great, effective prayer, but the word serenity is even more; it is a state of mind that describes a way of life that is peaceful, satisfying, and spiritually fulfilling.

We are living in a stressful world, divided politically, religiously, economically, racially and socially. Under the circumstances, peace of mind is not that easy to come by. It takes a personal choice to rise above the conflicted global consciousness that we see in every newscast or radio talk show, and seek an individual state of mind that is, well, serene.

A serene state of mind is aware of the conflicts, recognizes the stresses, and acknowledges the necessity of personal activities that don’t contribute to the stress, but work to alleviate them. It accepts that there are things one cannot change, and some things that one can, and is wise enough to know the difference. So the Serenity Prayer is ‘right on’ but there is more.

Having too many things to do and too little time or help to do them can destroy a serene state of mind, unless one chooses to let God’s inner presence overcome the obstacles. When I am in a state of serenity I simply glide through my obligations and time seems to stand still. When I am frenzied things get complicated, time and deadlines are constantly in my face and my energy is scattered and ineffective.

When that happens I stop and take a deep breath, consciously turn my attention and my trust to that inner Presence of Love and Peace, for that is what God Is, and I feel the serenity begin to fill my body and soul once again. Serenity is a conscious choice and a guiding energy that puts my life in harmony with God’s plan for good...for all people...everywhere.

Love and blessings,

Art & Dottie



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(Cover photo by Art Holt - Waterfall - DuPont Forrest, NC)

HAPPY THANKSGIVING EVERYONE!



We give thanks for all the blessings that have filled our lives, and the friendships that have brought us together, whether in Spirit or in person. May the coming year see Peace and Freedom enjoyed throughout the world.



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