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“Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish!”

Commencement at Stanford University <by Steve Jobs>

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(1) I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. Truth be told, I never graduated from college and this is the closest I’ve ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life.

(2) 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 or so before I really quit.

(3) My biological mother was a young, unwed graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. My biological mother found out later that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school.

(4) 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.

(5) My second story is about love and loss. I was lucky; I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parent’s garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4,000 employees. We had just released our finest creation – the Macintosh – a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? And so at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

(6) I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

(7) I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

(8) Sometimes life's gonna hit you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. And don't settle. So keep looking. Don't settle.

(9) My third story is about death. Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure – these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

(10) About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order.

(11) 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 thankfully I'm fine now.

(12) This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades. 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.

(13) 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. Everything else is secondary.

(14) 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.

(15) 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. Thank you all very much.