

## Text 9

### **Steve Jobs told students: ‘Stay hungry. Stay foolish.’**

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Steve Jobs, the late Apple co-founder revealed in a commencement speech at Stanford University in 2005 why he dropped out of college - and why he thought it was one of the best things he ever did. Yet he had other advice for the students.

Jobs started that speech by talking about being adopted as a baby, and why, 17 years later, he attended Reed College in Oregon for only six months before dropping out. He said: “My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates but later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.”

“And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents’ savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn’t see the value in it. So I decided to drop out and the minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn’t interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example.

“Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Because I had dropped out and didn’t have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can’t capture, and I found it fascinating.

“None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But 10 years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac.”

At the end of the speech, his advice to the students went like this:

“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.

“When I was young, there was an amazing publication called ‘The Whole Earth Catalog’, which was one of the bibles of my generation. This was in the late 1960’s 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. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: “Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.” It was their farewell message as they signed off. 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.”

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