

“Just Three Stories”: The Career Lessons Behind Steve Jobs’ Stanford University Commencement Address

Julia Richardson
York University

Michael B. Arthur
Suffolk University

This paper examines the pedagogical value of Steve Job’s Stanford University Commencement Address for understanding and teaching about careers in the 21st Century. The address is organized around “just three stories.” This paper will show how the first story draws attention to different sources of learning and the need for authenticity. It will then show how the second story illustrates what it is like to experience and manage a career change, with a specific focus on involuntary job loss as an opportunity for growth and reinvention. The third story connects to the career as a ‘calling’ and circles back to authenticity as both a motor and anchor for careers. In addition to these themes, a note of caution should be added that the speech overlooks the contextual and individual barriers in contemporary careers. Finally, combining the three stories and introducing a further theoretical component, the paper shows how the speech provides an opportunity to illustrate the “intelligent career” framework.

Steve Jobs’ 2005 commencement address at Stanford University provided important insights into his life experiences and his views on themes as diverse as innovation and creativity, love, family, and death. However, for management scholars its greatest strength may be its capacity to help understand and teach about people’s career experiences and trajectories. This includes, for example, the need to make sense of and find authenticity in a career, the impact of other stakeholders on that career, changing career direction, learning from events in the past, and using them to fulfill aspirations for the future. The audience was a group of young graduates who were just starting

out in their own careers, their families, and university staff and faculty. The speech was written with graduates directly in mind and with a focus on what they might learn from Jobs' experiences, and how they might be able to incorporate that learning into their own future. In addition, a closer look shows that it speaks to the career concerns of a much wider audience.

At the beginning of the address, Jobs stated that he wanted to tell three stories from his life: "That's it. No big deal. Just three stories." Yet, as management scholars interested in how people experience and manage their careers, the stories each revealed something not only about the man, but also about careers in the 21st Century. They said something about how to navigate the opportunities and challenges that appear along the way, and how to create opportunities from them. They showed the environmental context in which careers evolve and the inevitability of change, the passage of time, and how people must be prepared to adapt to and still be drivers of change. They also revealed the importance of staying true to oneself, to personal aspirations and values and, above all else, how people might learn from their experience and the experience of others. Indeed, the need to work with, and oftentimes against others permeated all three stories.

The first story, which Jobs called "Connecting the Dots," focused on his early career experiences, including his childhood, education and decision to drop in and out of university classes. He talked especially about not knowing what he wanted to do with his life and his journey toward finding out. He also connected his early learning experiences to the development of the first MacIntosh computer and to discovering his love of calligraphy. In the second story, "Love and Loss," he began by saying how 'lucky' he was to have found what he loved to do early in life. He then spoke about the early years at Apple, its growth into a \$2 billion dollar company and his subsequent very public and personally devastating exit. He connected this experience to another learning phase in his career – learning to deal with loss, rejection and failure, starting up NeXT, and investing in Pixar. This story included references to changes in his personal life, meeting his wife, starting a family and, particularly, to keep looking for what or whom to love. The third story, "Death," addressed his cancer diagnosis and how such experiences were life-changing. He stated that in as much as they seemed to come out of the blue, these experiences also serve as a reminder of mortality, emphasizing again the importance of following one's heart, finding something to love and to never settle for second best.

While addressing several different themes, each of the stories and the entire speech were permeated by a single underlying message: that people need to listen to their hearts and heads, do what is important to them, pursue their ambitions, and take charge of and responsibility for their careers. His references to the head and the heart were significant because in Jobs' and popular usage, the heart represents feelings and intuition, while the head represents our rational and calculative leanings. A key concern here is to acknowledge the dynamic interplay between the head and the heart in career decisions and experiences. Finally, Jobs closed the speech with a simple piece of advice, "Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish" which served to further integrate the stories' separate messages and focus attention on the audience's future careers. Each of the stories will be discussed in order to consider how they can help management scholars to understand and teach about careers in the 21st Century.

Connecting the Dots

At the beginning of his speech, Jobs triggered a chorus of cheers when he confessed that “this is the closest I’ve ever gotten to a college graduation.” He seemed to celebrate that he had achieved so much without possessing a university degree and to contradict much contemporary management, education, and career theory. The more mainstream view reflected that of Becker (1999) for whom formal education was a key component of ‘human capital’ or “the stock of competences, knowledge and personality attributes that have a direct impact on our ability to work and thus to produce economic value” (p. 15). In particular, Becker suggested that formal education – the kind that Jobs appeared to reject - had a direct impact on not just *what* people do but also *how* it is done. More recently and adding to this argument, The Economist (2011) reported that “a university degree has never been more essential for securing good employment.”

Yet, while at first glance Jobs seemed to reject the value of formal education, a closer look reveals a different message. Although he dropped out of formal classes, he did not give up on formal education altogether. Rather than discounting formal education and objective knowledge, Jobs took a more nuanced approach. He reflected, for example, on finding the calligraphy classes he took up as being ‘priceless’: “Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country... If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it’s likely that no personal computer would have them.” This showed that Jobs was, in fact, seeking out education and learning – even if it wasn’t neatly packaged into a formal degree program.

Jobs also drew attention to *informal* opportunities for learning, or what Penrose (1959) once called knowledge gained through *personal experience* rather than formal learning. Jobs reported he “would walk the 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.” In this part of the story, Jobs introduced two further themes. First, he echoed recent research (Schuller et al., 2004) that suggested that the benefits of learning are ‘dynamic’ where one experience of learning leads to more learning, but that what constitutes ‘progression’ in learning may differ among individuals depending on their respective contexts. Second, he alluded to the impact of luck or serendipity – of “what I stumbled into” - on learning opportunities and subsequent career experiences, a theme attracting growing interest from careers and management scholars alike (Bright, Pryor & Harpham, 2004; El-Sawad, Cohen & Arnold, 2005).

Though Jobs cautioned against viewing these experiences and achievements as part of some master plan: “Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college.” This first story reflected the impact of ‘planned happenstance’ (Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999) rather than ‘luck’ on career experiences. Jobs transformed an unplanned event (not seeing the value in the formal classes) into an opportunity for learning (dropping into the calligraphy classes). If Rojewski’s (1999) definition of luck in careers as “unplanned, accidental or otherwise situational, unpredictable or unintentional events or encounters” (p. 296) is accepted,

the experience Jobs described was less a question of luck than of his own agency that enabled him to create and then profit from an unexpected, rather than 'lucky' learning opportunity. In fact, his 'stumbling' into the calligraphy classes was far from unintentional because it was his "curiosity and intuition" that led him to join those classes. Therefore, rather than meandering "through experiences initiated by others" and passively "awaiting a knock on the door" (Mitchell et al., 1999, p. 17), Jobs took control of the situation and found a form of learning that did interest him.

This first story had another message, one which permeated much of the speech as a whole: the importance of authenticity in people's careers. Jobs was unequivocal in stating that the regular classes he initially attended left him lacking a sense of authenticity and purpose (Maniero & Sullivan, 2006). Therefore, in order to counter this experience he engaged in the exploration stage of what Svejenova (2005) described as the four stages of authenticity development. This involved "stumbling" and following his "curiosity and intuition," even though nothing of what he did "had even a hope of any practical application" in his life. As the story continued, Jobs moved from the exploration stage toward a *focus* stage involving the development of the first Macintosh computer, and then – after the setback of having to leave Apple - toward greater *independence* by expanding on his individual autonomy and professional control. Finally, he worked towards *professionalism*, the fourth stage of authenticity involving mastery of his work and the way in which he engaged with his audiences.

Throughout this first story, Jobs also urged his audience to follow their intuition rather than a more "objective" or "rational" career plan that would have immediate value in the job market. This argument challenged much of the traditional vocational guidance literature with its focus on crafting careers that responded solely to the requirements of an employer (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Rather, it echoed Ibarra's (2002) advice for "crafting experiments" to discover one's own sense of identity and "trying out new activities and professional roles on a small scale before making a major commitment to a different path" (2002, p. 343). For example, Jobs 'dropped in' to the calligraphy classes, experimenting with what he might learn there even though "it was pretty scary" at the time. Indeed, though he had no expectation that calligraphy would have any "practical application," his seemingly urgent need for a sense of authenticity encouraged him to listen to his intuition. So, rather than sticking to a more traditional path of formal education, he went ahead to learn about "serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great." The passion in his reflections on those classes came through loud and clear. "It was beautiful," he said, "historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating."

Love and Loss

In his next story, Jobs showed appreciation for the opportunities and experiences of a career change and what could be learned and gained from experiencing involuntary job loss. In his case it was a very public job loss at the hands of John Sculley whom Jobs had personally recruited to take over as Apple's CEO: "Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the

first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him.” This story highlighted the unpredictability of contemporary careers, and the impact of changing contextual circumstances on career opportunities and experiences. This is a theme that has garnered much interest among both careers and management scholars (e.g. Cummings & Estabrooks, 2003; King, Burke & Pemberton, 2005; Mayrhofer, Meyer & Steyrer, 2007) and is a central concern among national governments, especially in times of economic hardship. Jobs was also speaking to the connection between career and identity, an increasingly important theme in career research.

In reflecting on his involuntary job loss as a form of career transition, Jobs explained how losing his job at Apple impacted his sense of identity: “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.” He spoke to the implications of job loss not just for a sense of identity, but also for self-efficacy and self-worth (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). In this respect he drew attention to job loss as a form of ‘identity threat’ or ‘identity violation’ (Petriglieri, 2011; Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006) requiring ‘identity work’ where people are challenged to reevaluate and reconstruct their sense of who they are. Jobs’ description of being ‘very publicly out’ also reflected Ibarra and Barbulescu’s (2010) argument that such work is especially likely in the context of career transitions that are ‘visible’ and with ‘high stakes.’

Rather than focusing wholly on the negative impact of involuntary job loss, however, Jobs echoed the work of some scholars who suggested that it can present opportunities for growth, redirection and consideration of new career alternatives (e.g. Mallon & Duberly, 2000; Zikic & Klehe, 2006; Zikic & Richardson, 2007): “I didn’t see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have 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.” This assertion turned the attention to identity change (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010), and told how the crisis of losing one’s job may also give rise to the formation of a new identity. Jobs’ described, for example, how his exit from Apple opened the door for reconsideration of his professional identity, what he wanted from life, and what opportunities were available to him. This led him to computer graphics, the world of animation and from there, to the studios of Lucasfilm and eventually to Walt Disney. For Jobs, as for many others who experience involuntary job loss, it was a positive ‘trigger’ to reconsider his career alternatives (Flum & Blustein, 2000).

Extending observations beyond the individual, this story also drew attention to the value of “career communities” (Arthur & Parker, 2002; Parker, Arthur & Inkson, 2004) and in particular, of “occupational communities” (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984) where both explicit and tacit knowledge are developed by working with occupational peers: “Woz and I started Apple in my parents’ 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 4000 employees.” Even while he felt like “running away from the [Silicon] Valley” occupational community that he knew, he noted that he was ‘still in love’ with what he did, and ultimately with what that community enabled him to do. This theme spoke to the value of the psychosocial support (Chandler &

Kram, 2007; Cotton, Shen & Livne-Tarandach, 2011; Shen & Kram, 2011) people get from working with others and the impact of that support on our career experiences. It especially showed how working with others, and particularly in contexts where a sense of authenticity and belonging is felt, can be a source of inspiration and comfort during a career change (Shen & Kram, 2011).

In addition to highlighting the positive impact of career communities, Jobs alluded to what could happen when relationships - like his soured relationships with John Sculley and others at Apple - don't work out, and where rejection and loss of face challenge emergent identity (Ibarra, 2003). His sense of disappointment was palpable. Yet, he returned again to the centrality of "loving what you do" and the value of authenticity not just for when things are going well but also as a source of strength when things are going astray: "Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did." This assertion echoed other career scholars who suggested that a sense of authenticity and fulfilling one's 'calling' could be a strong driving force during difficult or challenging career events (e.g. Bunderson & Thompson, 2009).

Continuing with the theme of relationships, this second story also spoke to the impact of strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) on career experiences and especially to their value during a career transition, such as job loss. After losing his position at Apple, Jobs talked about how he moved on to start NeXT and Pixar, a journey that was facilitated by connections he had maintained with Alan Kay during his time with Apple and those he made with Ed Catmull at Lucasfilms. Yet the ties he had maintained with his former colleagues at Apple were later reignited when Apple bought NeXT and he returned to Apple and took with him the technology that had been developed at NeXT. Finally, this story also revealed that making "mistakes," or what Jobs in his own inimitable way described as "screwing up so badly," may be an integral or even necessary part of even the most remarkable careers. "It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it." Rather than seeking to avoid career mistakes, he echoed the work of career scholars who argued that career mistakes may mark a new beginning rather than an end to a career journey (Blenkinsop & Zdunczyk, 2005).

Death

In his final story, Jobs brought the audience back to the importance of authenticity, what Svejnova (2005) in her study of the creative industries described as "both a motor and anchor for careers" (p. 969). In Jobs' words: "Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition ... They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary." Just as Svejnova (2005) spoke of the "path with a heart," so Jobs told the graduates "there is no reason not to follow your heart." The theme of movement, following a 'path to authenticity' rather than authenticity being an 'end point' is important and worth exploring further. In particular it drew attention to how authenticity is "a moving target.....that is continually evolving" (Peterson, 2005): "For the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: 'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?' And whenever the answer has been 'No' for too many days in a row,

I know I need to change something.” Here Jobs seemed to be suggesting that achieving authenticity can be a platform for both objective and subjective success and that “there is no reason not to follow your heart.” This echoed Hall and Chandler’s (2005) assertion that “an individual whose career is driven by a sense of calling benefits from enhanced metacompetencies, both of which aid the individual in navigating the career ‘terrain’ and a sense of psychological success” (2005, p. 89). It also resonated with more recent work about the value of having a career vision, understood as a clear sense of what one wants to achieve in one’s career (Holtschlag & Masuda, 2011).

Extending the discussion of authenticity further, in his last story Jobs talked in depth about the importance of retaining a sense of authenticity in relationships with others. “Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice,” he said. This assertion echoed Ibarra’s (2002) advice about seeing our “potential selves” and having the courage to “test fantasies – otherwise, they remain just that” (p. 45). Jobs’ cautionary note that time is “limited” added further urgency to this topic. In this respect, he spoke to a theme that has dominated much contemporary career scholarship: the importance of taking charge of one’s life and career rather than ceding responsibility to others (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

Jobs contention that “There is no reason not to follow your heart,” introduced above, also alluded to the idea of his career as a journey. Whereas traditional use of journey metaphors has historically highlighted upward mobility (e.g. Savickas, 2000), as El-Sawad (2005) argued, a wider range of metaphors can provide important insights into individual career experiences. Thus, Jobs seemed to use the metaphor of the journey to reiterate the need for acceptance of, and encouragement towards, readiness for change and adaptation. Contemporary career scholars have taken a similar stance, indicating how the metaphor of career as a journey has a long tradition reflecting diverse work experiences such as “rowing down a river (no way back); climbing a mountain (upward, clear destination, many potential routes); navigating at sea (no path, not necessarily a destination, unknown obstacles); and wandering in space (no map, lost)” (Inkson, 2007, p. 129).

In the third story, Jobs introduced the concept of death to focus explicitly on change by saying, “and yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it.” In this respect, people should take responsibility for their achievements but also accept there are some things that cannot be changed, such as one’s mortality. Yet, knowing what cannot be changed, he argued, invites people to take action: “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..... Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose.” This assertion connected again the importance of taking charge of one’s life and adapting to change as a central theme in the contemporary career literature (e.g. Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; O’Mahony & Bechky, 2006; Reitman & Schneer, 2003).

Continuing with the theme of change, Jobs also spoke to the necessity for change “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.” This assertion pointed to the value of change as an opportunity for “new beginnings” for

someone to redirect themselves and their career (Wise & Millward, 2005) and thus, something which people should embrace and engage with rather than resist. It also reminded the graduates how their careers and lives were more directly impacted by external forces over which they had no control. Towards the end of this story, Jobs spoke more about the inevitability and impact of external forces of change, but this time about technological change where “typewriters, scissors, and Polaroid cameras” were replaced by personal computers, desktop publishing and Google.

With these observations, Jobs moved away from the focus on individual agency that dominated much of the speech. In doing so, he drew attention to the duality of agency and structure in careers: that in as much as people must take responsibility for their careers, they are also impacted by broader social forces. The allusion to these broader social forces worked towards answering recent calls for career scholars to pay more attention to institutional structures and their impact on career opportunities and experiences (e.g. Inkson et al., 2012; Mayrhofer et al., 2007; Zeitz, Blau & Fertig, 2009). Yet, because it appeared rather late in the speech, it invited the audience to consider potential limitations in the speech’s value for understanding contemporary careers.

A Word of Caution

The interpretation of each of the stories and the speech as a whole signaled its value for encouraging students to take charge of their careers, not to be trapped by what Jobs’ called “dogma,” and to avoid letting “the noise of others’ opinions” drown out one’s own “inner voice.” Taking this message to heart, and listening to one’s own “inner voices,” it is also incumbent to present a more cautious view.

First, while Jobs’ message has much value for encouraging individual action, it underplays both contextual and individual barriers to career self-management. In this regard, it reinforces arguments in the contemporary career literature, suggesting that individuals should and indeed can be “masters of their own destinies” (El-Sawad, 2005, p. 36). While taking this stance offers a positive call to individual action, there has been growing concern for more explicit recognition that “in all careers there are constraints on which opportunities can be accessed” (King, et al., 2011, p. 998-999). Whereas Jobs was in a situation where he could drop in and out of classes and presumably had parental support to do so, others may not be quite as fortunate due to their social and economic circumstances. Indeed, according to El-Sawad, “images of free, autonomous and self-directing career actors” (2005, p. 36) bear little resemblance to some people’s experiences of work. In this regard, Jobs seemed to be assuming what Pringle and Mallon (2003) describe as “an assured, skilled, probably well-qualified agent, with the human and social capital to leverage their skills, while traversing a terrain that holds no barriers for the adaptable and the well networked” (p. 847). Drawing further on the same authors, he also seemed to fall prey to what Pringle and Mallon (2003) described as erring “in the direction of privileging, individualism and individual choice” (p. 849).

Although Jobs was able to spend time searching for his calling, for some – if not most – people, responsibilities to others and social and economic circumstances do not allow them to search for their calling, let alone fulfill it (see Berg, Grant & Johnson, 2010). Similarly, as Jobs himself acknowledged, he found his calling early in life

whereas others may not (Berg et al., 2010). Moreover, although there is much to be said for finding and fulfilling one's calling, it can also be a 'double-edged sword' being both 'binding and ennobling' (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009, p. 32). On the one hand, it can provide for a feeling of authenticity and meaning in work, but on the other it can also create a sense of duty and obligation which may affect relationships with others, as was the case with Jobs (Isaacson, 2011).

Regarding the proclaimed positive side of involuntary job loss, it should be acknowledged that Jobs was in a very different situation than most people who lose their job. Indeed, recent research has suggested that most people are likely to experience lower self-esteem, depression, and health problems after losing their job (Zeitz et al., 2009). Therefore, whereas losing one's job can be an opportunity for identity change, "new beginnings," professional and personal growth, not everyone is in a position to benefit from such an opportunity. In this regard, it is beneficial to be mindful of Petriglieri's (2011, p. 657) cautionary note that the "number of people who contemplate a specific identity transition is always higher than the number who actually complete it." Moreover, whereas Jobs welcomed his new found freedom to explore and craft further career opportunities, for many people the change and uncertainty incurred during job loss is more likely to be a source of stress than liberation (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

Finally, whereas the consistent message to pursue one's own sense of authenticity and not let others' opinions drown out one's inner voice is important, steadfastly pursuing one's own agendas regardless of the implications for others seems intuitively problematic. Regardless of his personal and professional success and for fulfilling his ambition to "put a ding in the universe" (Schofield, 2011), Jobs was an infamously difficult person to work with (Economist, 2011; Isaacson, 2011). Indeed, his behavior towards others, work colleagues, family and friends, has come under much scrutiny and criticism (Isaacson, 2011).

Tying the Stories Together: Intelligent Careers

Tying the stories together adds an important theoretical dimension to the speech as a whole. In particular, Jobs made consistent references to the interdependence of *why*, *how* and with *whom* people work, a key plank in "intelligent career" theory (Arthur, Claman & Defillippi, 1995; Parker, Khapova & Arthur, 2009). A concern with *why* people work – that is, identification with and motivation to perform work – permeates each of the stories. The need to be authentic in understanding and then fulfilling the *why* was a key message. Jobs also acknowledged the fundamental importance of how people work – in making a difference to what gets done – and with *whom* people work – in both building effective relationships (such as his relationship with Steve Wozniak) and managing situations when relationships have gone wrong (such as his relationship with John Sculley and the Board at Apple).

More important than illustrating examples of why, how and with whom people work, however, are the links the speech suggested between them. Jobs clearly emphasized the influence of why he worked and how he worked – in believing in and contributing to the various groundbreaking products that are his legacy. In the early stages of his career, his search for a sense of authenticity, for example, led him

to the calligraphy classes which would later inspire the design and functionality of the Macintosh computer. Later, after his departure from Apple, that same need for authenticity and creativity led him to start up NeXT, and then Pixar, which became the most successful animation studio in the world. Why he worked also set a standard for with whom he worked, and in turn, which relationships worked, and when they worked. His relationships with Sculley and others shifted over time, as did his relationship with Wozniak. For example, even while his relationship with Sculley and Apple's Board had soured, his need for a sense of authenticity, creativity and innovation kept him in Silicon Valley to continue working with like-minded individuals in the creative industries. Reverse influences can also be inferred where, a) with whom he worked influenced why he worked (for example, how working with the leaders of Pixar fuelled his desire for creativity and innovation yet further), and b) where how he worked reinforced that desire further (for example, when the technology developed at NeXT became a central feature of Apple's expansion).

There are also suggested links between how and with whom Jobs worked. How he worked was clearly a magnet for some people and a turnoff for others. The clearest examples in the speech were his early successful collaboration with Wozniak which can be juxtaposed with his subsequent more problematic relationship with John Sculley. However, there are many later examples of his relationships with others more fully recounted in his biography, most notably concerning the influence of Jeffrey Katzenberg at Pixar and designer John Ive at Apple (Isaacson, 2011). The point in highlighting these links is not so much to explore which was most important, or when or why they were important. Rather, it is to suggest that there are dynamic relationships among why, how, and with whom people work that can keep a career vital over the course of one's working life.

In addition to the 'positive' connections between each of the dimensions, the speech highlighted potential sources of 'disconnection' where, for example, threats to how people work, such as job loss, can have a direct impact on why people work where the motivation to pursue a particular career direction is challenged. Such a turn of events may also lead to questioning relationships with others, perhaps resulting in the end of some relationships as a different career direction is taken. Likewise, problems with whom people work may, in turn, lead to problems with how they work where severed relationships create barriers to certain work opportunities which may, in turn, impact the motivation to work.

Jobs closed his speech by borrowing a message from the back cover of the last edition of *The Whole Earth Catalog* from the mid-1970s: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." The words were simple, but with the three stories behind them, new depth can be seen. Staying hungry relates to why people work, to what everyone wants their life and career to stand for, and the difference people want to make in society. It also encourages people to never be satisfied, to be ready to innovate and improvise, and above all else, to make the most of the many learning opportunities that are encountered along the way. Staying foolish relates to openness to both new ideas (in how we work) and new people (with whom we work). It encourages people to challenge established norms about how to think and behave and invites everyone to keep going even if "common sense" might suggest otherwise. Staying hungry and foolish can be good for everyone

- and for the world to which people contribute.

At the start of this paper, it was suggested that the speech could serve as an aid to teaching about career experience and trajectories. However, not all students will agree with such an interpretation. On the contrary, Jobs' first wish would be for students to join the conversation rather than defer to another's "wisdom." This is how it should be. The real power of the speech for management learning and education therefore, is that it offers a beginning, a commencement, for further conversation.

References

- Arthur, M. B., Claman, P. H. & Defillippi, R. J. (1995). Intelligent Enterprise, Intelligent Careers. *Academy of Management Executive*, 9(4): 7-20.
- Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N. & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2005). Career Success in a Boundaryless Career World. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2): 177-202.
- Arthur, M. B. & Parker, P. (2002). Technology, Community and the Practice of HRM. *Human Resource Planning*, 25(4): 38-42.
- Becker, G. (1999). 'Bribe' Third World Parents to Keep Their Kids in School. *Business Week*, November 22: 15.
- Berg, J. M., Grant, A. M. & Johnson, V. (2010). When Callings are Calling: Crafting Work and Leisure in Pursuit of Unanswered Occupational Callings. *Organization Science*, 21(5): 973-994.
- Blenkinsop, J. & Zdunczyk, K. (2005). Making Sense of Mistakes in Managerial Careers. *Career Development International*, 10(5): 359-416.
- Bright, J. E., Pryor, R. & Harpham, L. (2004). The Role of Chance Events in Career Decision Making. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66: 561-576.
- Briscoe, J. P. & Hall, D. T. (2006). The Interplay of Boundaryless and Protean Careers: Combinations and Implications. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 69(1): 4-18.
- Bunderson, J. S. & Thompson, J. A. (2009). The Call of the Wild: Zookeepers, Callings, and the Double-Edged Sword of Deeply Meaningful Work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 54: 32-57.
- Chandler, D. E. & Kram, K. E. (2007). Mentoring and Developmental Networks in the New Career Context. In M. Peiperl (Ed.), *Handbook of career studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cotton, R., Shen, Y. & Livne-Tarandach, R. (2011). On Becoming Extraordinary: The Content and Structure of the Developmental Networks of Major League Baseball Hall of Famers. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(1): 15-46.
- Cummings, G. & Estabrooks, C. A. (2003). The Effects of Hospital Restructuring That Included Layoffs on Individual Nurses who Remained Employed: A Systematic Review of Impact. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 23(8/9): 8-53.
- Economist. (2011, October 6th). Obituary: Steve Jobs. *The Economist*.
- El-Sawad, A. (2005). Becoming a 'Lifer'? Unlocking Career Through Metaphor. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78: 23-41.
- El-Sawad, A., Cohen, L. & A.J. (2005). *The Accidental Career? Luck at Work*. Paper presented at the 21st EGOS Colloquium, Berlin.
- Flum, H. & Blustein, D. L. (2000). Reinvigorating the Study of Vocational Exploration:

- A Framework for Research. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 56: 380-404.
- Granovetter, M. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-1380.
- Halbesleben, J. R. B. & Buckley, M. R. (2004). Burnout in Organizational Life. *Journal of Management*, 30(6): 859-879.
- Hall, D. T. & Chandler, D. E. (2005). Psychological Success: When the Career is Calling. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 26: 155-176.
- Holtschlag, C. & Masuda, A. D. (2011). The Impact of Career Visions on Work Attitude: A Longitudinal Approach. *Career Development International*, 16(7): 668-683.
- Ibarra, H. (2002). How to Stay Stuck in the Wrong Career. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(12): 40-48.
- Ibarra, H. (2003). *Working Identity*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Ibarra, H. & Barbulescu, R. (2010). Identity as Narrative: Prevalence, Effectiveness, and Consequences of Narrative Identity Work in Maco Work Role Transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(1): 135-154.
- Inkson, K. (2007). *Understanding Careers: The Metaphors of Working Lives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Inkson, K. & Arthur, M. B. (2001). How to be a Successful Career Capitalist. *Organizational Dynamics*, 30(1): 48-61.
- Inkson, K., Gunz, H. P., Ganesh, S. & Roper, J. (2012). Boundaryless Careers: Bringing Back Boundaries. *Organization Studies*, 33(3): 323-340.
- Isaacson, W. (2011). *Steve Jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- King, Z., Burke, S. & Pemberton, J. (2005). The Bounded Career: An Empirical Study of Human Capital, Career Mobility, and Employment Outcomes in a Mediated Labour Market. *Human Relations*, 58: 981-1007.
- Mallon, M. & Duberly, J. (2000). Managers and Professionals in the Contingent Workforce. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 10(1): 33-47.
- Maniero, L. A. & Sullivan, S. E. (2006). *The Opt-Out Revolt*. Mountain View, California: Davis-Black.
- Mayrhofer, W., Meyer, M. & Steyrer, J. (2007). Going Beyond the Individual: Some Potential Contributions from a Career Field and Habitus Perspective for Global Career Research and Practice. In M. Peiperl (Ed.), *Handbook of Career Studies*, (pp. 215-240). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McKee-Ryan, F. M., Song, Z., Wanberg, C. R. & Kinicki, A. J. (2005). Psychological and Physical Well-Being During Unemployment: A Meta-Analytic Study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90: 53-76.
- Mitchell, K. E., Levin, A. S. & Krumboltz, J. D. (1999). Planned Happenstance: Constructing Unexpected Career Opportunities. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 77(115-124).
- O'Mahony, S. & Bechky, B. A. (2006). Stretchwork: Managing the Career Progression Paradox in External Labor Markets. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(5): 918-941.
- Parker, P., Arthur, M. B. & Inkson, K. (2004). Career Communities: A Preliminary Exploration of Member-Defined Career Support Structures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25: 489-514.
- Parker, P., Khapova, S. N. & Arthur, M. B. (2009). The Intelligent Career Framework

- as a Basis for Interdisciplinary Inquiry. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75: 291-302.
- Petriglieri, J. L. (2011). Under Threat: Responses to and the Consequences of Threats to Individuals' Identities. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(4): 641-662.
- Pratt, M. G., Rockmann, K. W. & Kaufmann, J. B. (2006). Constructing Professional Identity: The Role of Work and Identity Learning Cycles in the Customization of Identity Among Medical Graduates. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(2): 235-262.
- Pringle, J. & Mallon, M. (2003). Challenges for the Boundaryless Career Odyssey. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(5): 839-853.
- Reitman, F. & Schner, J. A. (2003). The Promised Path: A Longitudinal Study of Managerial Careers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18(1): 60-75.
- Savickas, M. L. (2000). Renovating the Psychology of Careers for the 21st Century. In Collin, A. & Young, R. A. (Eds.), *The Future of Career* (pp. 53-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schofield, J. (2011, Wednesday 5th October). Steve Jobs Obituary. *The Guardian*.
- Schuller, T., Preston, J., Hammond, C., Brasset-Grune, A. & Bynner, J. (2004). *The Benefits of Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Shen, Y. & Kram, K. E. (2011). Expatriates' Developmental Networks: Network Diversity Base, and Support Functions. *Career Development International*, 16(6): 528-552.
- Sullivan, S. E. & Baruch, Y. (2009). Advances in Career Theory and Research: A Critical Review and Agenda for Future Exploration. *Journal of Management*, 35(6): 1542-1571.
- Svejenova, S. (2005). 'The path with the heart': Creating the Authentic Career. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5): 947-974.
- Van Maanen, J. & Barley, S. R. (1984). Occupational communities: Culture and Control in Organisations. In L. Cummings (Ed.), *Research in Organisational Behaviour* (Vol. 6). Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press.
- Wise, A. J. & Millward, L. J. (2005). The Experiences of Voluntary Career Change in 30-somethings and Implications. *Career Development International*, 10(5): 400-419.
- Zeitl, G., Blau, G. & Fertig, J. (2009). Boundaryless Careers and Institutional Resources. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(2): 372-398.
- Zikic, J. & Klehe, U. (2006). Job Loss as a Blessing in Disguise: The Role of Career Exploration and Career Planning in Predicting Reemployment Quality. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 69: 391-409.
- Zikic, J. & Richardson, J. (2007). Unlocking the Careers of Business Professionals Following Job Loss: Sensemaking and Career Exploration of Older Workers. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 24(1): 58-73.