

I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first six months, but then

(if) truth be told ≒ to tell the truth

That's it. ≒ That's all there is to it.

No big deal. ≒ Not important at all.

stayed around for another 18 months or so before I really left.

I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't

work out OK ≡ turn out well

the minute ~ ≡ as soon as ~

Optional Reading

Whole Earth Catalog

In his Stanford University commencement speech, Steve Jobs quotes the farewell message from the back cover of the 1974 edition of *Whole Earth Catalog*: “Stay hungry. Stay foolish.”

Whole Earth Catalog, published by Stewart Brand during the late 1960s and 1970s, was extremely popular with the American counterculture of that time. When Brand saw the NASA satellite photo of the Earth, he believed it was visual proof of our unity and specialness, as our bright blue Earth contrasted with the black emptiness of space. Differences in skin color, religion, nationality and wealth shrink to nothing when viewed from space. Humanity is

but a small part of the miraculous and delicate ecosystem. Brand thought the image was a powerful symbol of the shared destiny of the world's people. He and many others of his generation were committed to a thorough renovation of society to make it ecologically sustainable and socially just.

In the first issue of *WEC*, Brand wrote: “We are as gods and might as well get good at it.” He went on to say that we are accustomed to asking other people—government, schools, the church—to do things for us. Often the result is just more problems. Brand saw the world entering an age of personal power. Like gods we have the power to conduct our own education, find our own inspiration, and shape our own environment. *Whole Earth*