

In 1998 I was asked to speak at Mac World. It marked the first time Steve Jobs had returned to his company and would speak at the famous Mac World event.



What I didn't know when invited was that I was scheduled to speak immediately after Mr. Jobs. I, like everyone else in the audience, sat mesmerized as he stepped comfortably back into his old shoes and articulated a simple plan for reforming Apple Computer. Things were so bad at the company at that moment Michael Dell famously quipped 'Steve should shut down the company and give the money back to stock holders.' Michael later regretted the statement when Apple's market value sky rocketed past his own company's.

Nobody really believed Apple could be saved, and even though I was speaking at Mac World I was not so sure myself. As I sat in the audience watching Steve while he gave a presentation that had just 10 slides and just 10 words, 1 per slide. There were slides like "Product" and "Marketing". Here was a hairball of a company going out of business and Steve reduced the plan and message to words that anyone and everyone who sat in that audience understood. When he finished he asked the audience if they would like to see the new ad campaign which turned out to be his wonderful "Think Different" campaign featuring Mother Theresa, Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and so many other great men and women who have contributed to and shaped the world we live in today. The audience rose to their feet and cheered, myself included. Apple was alive again. Then it was my turn to speak. All I can say is being invited to follow a Steve Job's speech, particularly his return speech, is as close as you can get to being psychologically stoned by a crowd.

Steve gave me chill bumps as he spoke, and most importantly the focused nature of his message and the sincerity of the whole experience was overwhelming. This man wasn't back running Apple, this man loved Apple. I bring this up because to friends I recently described America as "a house I love, but I just don't like what "they" have done with the place." America today in simple terms is Apple without Jobs. I don't care if you are a Republican or Democrat, vision is vision and leadership is leadership and a hairball is a hairball. I can say that because I happen to be on both sides, or rather neither side, and have the voting and sometimes non-voting record to prove it. America is a place with a great former brand name, but inside its shell there is no institutional memory of what made us America in the first place. The founding fathers and their lessons are so

far removed and are often used more for political advantage than historical awareness. Political innovation in America has stopped and has been replaced by bureaucratic politics. Our founding fathers threw mud with the best of them, a common misperception, but they were also moving forward, advancing the political dialogue on the rights of people and their relationship to the state, and even though the Bill of Rights would follow the Constitution there was always some subliminal notion of driving towards the sanctity of the rights of the individual in everything that was debated.

I was in New York several weeks ago and the march Occupy Wall Street passed me by and my 13-year-old son literally had to hold me back from joining in. My battles with the banks are now famous or notorious depending on who you are. I am glad I didn't join because I got to see all the different groups marching by. Some were mad at the banks. Others were mad at the rich, people like Steve Jobs who in my opinion deserved all society gave him and we are still further indebted to him. Every 200 people or so brought some new message. I realized that this was not a movement likely to have any effect, but a cathartic outpouring of national emotion, anger and frustration. It was a sort of national temper tantrum. What a waste of so much power and energy.

I have been building businesses on the Internet for over 20 years and when people talk about the excitement of leaderless movements mixed with social media I am not quite sure they understand the connections or the implications. No change comes about without a well-defined purpose. No well-defined purpose happens without charismatic leadership. Social media has allowed lots of people to coalesce but without any agreement as to why they are REALLY there.

From my own experiences over the last 3 years I believe we as a nation have given up on the sanctity of individual rights and the belief in the individual over the institution. The FDIC truly believes that preserving the well being of American banks is now its mission because that helps society at large, even if some individuals get sacrificed in order for the larger good of national bank solvency. I will not bore anyone with a history lesson on the subject, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt was incredibly afraid of the moral hazard created by an FDIC, and opposed its formation for quite some time, but its sole purpose when created was to give money back to THE INDIVIDUALS who had lost it as a result of bank failures, which themselves were caused by too much speculation and risk.... sound familiar? The FDIC has actually flipped its purpose 180 degrees just as FDR feared to believe it is about saving banks and not people.

In my Huffington Post Article "Why I Fight", I wrote The Founding Father who envisioned a republic built on the unalienable rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" would be sickened at how the very institutions built to protect average citizens from repression have instead become weapons of the rich, the powerful, and mostly the corporate." I also wrote later in the article, "Americans are rightly suspicious of money men, and not just in the last few years. Jefferson himself once said "that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies." When it exists to support businesses and create jobs and fund innovation, finance is integral to a modern economy. But when finance becomes an end in itself and morphs

from tool to master, it's easy to imagine Jefferson's fear realized in a system that deprives "the people of all property until their children wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered."

You see we are not fighting either a new battle or a battle that our forefather Thomas Jefferson did not already see as a major threat. The problem is today we are falsely seduced by the notion of battles fought by egalitarian causes defined by lack of leadership. Some of the greatest leaders this planet has ever known created the most egalitarian nation this planet has ever known. Today nobody has the 10 slides with one word on each slide to deliver to the American people so that they can see what the future can and should look like. Protest is great because it expresses a right we mostly still have, but without clarity it is just a cacophony of sounds and nobody can hear A MESSAGE because there isn't one to be heard, there are hundreds.

It my experience it is no shock that every major bank in the world sets up head quarters in New York City. As a former CEO of a NASDAQ 100 company I founded I can promise you banks didn't all throw a dart at the American map and happen to hit the same bulls eye, New York City. Businesses follow where the laws and the judges give them preferential treatment over the individual. That is a simple truth of American business today. Where the inequality is greatest is also where one would expect the protest to be loudest which is why the seeds of a major movement, if it can give up the notion of chaos as leadership, and chaos as a goal began in New York and has a chance of growing and rebuilding a truly battered nation.

I am tired of a system that has forgotten the most basic reason we all want to live here, for "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." In my opinion there should be only one slide to this movement and it should be about restoring individual rights and freedoms. Rights to sue big companies and not have them grind you into the ground with millions of dollars in legal fees nobody can pay. Some companies have policies that they fight every lawsuit and appeal every case no matter the merits. They just want to send a message that you cannot afford due process as a person. We need right to control the amount of money given by corporations to PAC's. We need limits on spending on lobbyists. We need to take away the right of a businesses to bond on legal appeal while the individual, if a loser, has to come up with cash because he or she is not a business and does not have that option.

I could name 25 other ways small and large that the system prejudices you against corporations who are growing larger, and more and more resemble nation states, rather than members of our communities, and our own government whose powers increase almost daily. One of the scariest trends of all is the government has almost rendered the Freedom of Information Act worthless, just ask any reporter who has had to sue for information they have a legal right to get by asking.

If you plan to keep marching please don't be seduced by the vogueish idea of not having a leader and simply using social media as your form of expression. Social Media is only a form of COMMUNICATION. You must define sharply and clearly what you want if you hope to turn the growing energy of your movement into an arrow into the heart of

inequity and not just a cacophony of competing voices.

If there is but one lesson this movement should take away from the extraordinary life of Steve Jobs, it is that one man or woman with passion and sincerity in their heart can lead any organization from the near convulsions of death to the very upper reaches of what is truly possible, sometimes to places unimagined.

My regret is that all those well meaning marchers never had to suffer the indignity of following a Steve Jobs speech so they did not learn that it is clarity of purpose that is the path to success to Occupy Wall Street and not Broadway.

Halsey Minor