



Connecting the Dots and Living Your Passion

"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. You have to trust in something."

"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. **You've got to find what you love.**"

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. ... most important, **have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. Stay Hungry.**"

Steve Jobs – Excerpts from the address to the Stanford Graduating Class - June 2005

This past fall I was reminded about the address that Steve Jobs gave to the graduating class at Stanford. This message seemed to resonate with the annual review process, as well as setting the stage for the upcoming years plans.

Looking back on 2010, in addition to reflecting on your accomplishments, contributions and even set backs, think about **'how the dots were connected'**. This could be in the relationships in your life, the outcomes of your work or where you are personally, at years end. Prior to identifying what you would like to accomplish in 2011, think about:

Connecting the Dots from 2010:

1. What am I truly thankful for, from my past year's journey?
2. What were the 'priceless moments' in 2010?
3. *Where have my experiences of 2010 lead me?*
4. What did I learn about myself in the past year?

The second element of Job's address that really captured my attention was the message of **staying true to what you are passionate about and never giving up**. This past February the winter Olympics brought forward so many life stories of **individuals who faced adversity and never gave up**. It truly was not only inspirational, but provided powerful life lessons to reflect upon, in light of the individual challenges we all experience and how we face them. I also love the idea of 'staying hungry', which is the thirst for 'living'.

This leads to putting in writing what you would like to accomplish in the next 12 months that would 'feed your passion'! Before crafting your 'goals', take some time to think about how you would define 'happiness'?

To help you start this exercise, think about this definition, which is something I have been pondering on:

'Peace / Joy / Contribution / Growth / Simplicity = Happiness'

Peace with your talents, your 'lot in life' and what you really enjoy doing.

Joy by celebrating what is good in your life and thankful for your blessings.

Contribution – How and where you make a difference in the world.

Growth – Continuous learning and adapting, through changing personal habits.

Simplicity – Living a simple and humble life, in light of the increasing complexity of our world.

Peace, Joy, Contribution and Growth have a great deal to do with our 'passion in life'.

What would you like to accomplish in 2011 that would 'feed your passion'?

Put in writing the 2 or 3 things that answer this question and at the same time think about the 'new habits' that will lead you to 'being the best you can be and inspiring others', every day.

May your journey in 2011 be an enlightened realization of your fire within.