

Rabbi Manes Kogan

Devar Torah for Neilah

(With the help of my friend Rabbi Robyn Fryer Bodzin)

5772

Steve Jobs passed away this week at age 56.

Steve Jobs turned Apple into the largest retailer of music and helped popularize computer-animated films as the financier and CEO of Pixar. He was a key figure in changing the way people used the Internet and how they listened to music, watched TV shows and movies, and read books, disrupting industries in the process.

His family, in a statement released by Apple, said Mr. Jobs "died peacefully today surrounded by his family."

Do you know what else Steve Jobs did?

Steve Jobs failed better than anyone else in Silicon Valley, maybe better than anyone in corporate America.

But this man *learned* from his failures.

Everyone today thinks of Jobs as the genius who gave us the iPod, MacBooks, the iTunes store, the iPhone, the iPad, and so on. But let's not forget what else Jobs did.

Jobs brought us the Apple I and Apple II computers, early iterations of which sold in the mere hundreds and were complete failures.

Jobs was the architect of Lisa, introduced in the early 1980s. How many of us remember Lisa unless we read about it this week in the countless articles written about Jobs. This computer — which cost tens of millions of dollars to develop — was another epic fail. Shortly after Lisa, Apple had a success with its Macintosh computer.

But Jobs was out of a job by then, having been tossed aside thanks to the Lisa fiasco.

All of his later successes (iPod, iPad, iPhone, iTunes) were made possible by failure after failure after failure and the lessons learned from those failures.

Steve Jobs did not have a fear of failure.

He was fired by the successor he picked. It was one of the most public embarrassments of the last 30 years in business. He picked himself up and got back to work following his passion.

Eight years ago, Steve Jobs was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and told he only had a few weeks to live. Suddenly the world looked at him as a real flesh and blood person, not just some tech guru.

Even though technology has seemingly taken over the world, we learn from Steve Jobs that there are living people behind the i-everything.

The following is excerpted from Jobs' 2005 Stanford commencement speech:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice, and most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

Neilah is starting soon. The gates are starting to close. If you are entering these gates feeling like you have had more failures than success this year, don't dwell.

Just think about how next year can be a better year, and take active steps to make that happen. Learn from your mistakes. What you build today can change the world, and if not the world, it can certainly change you!