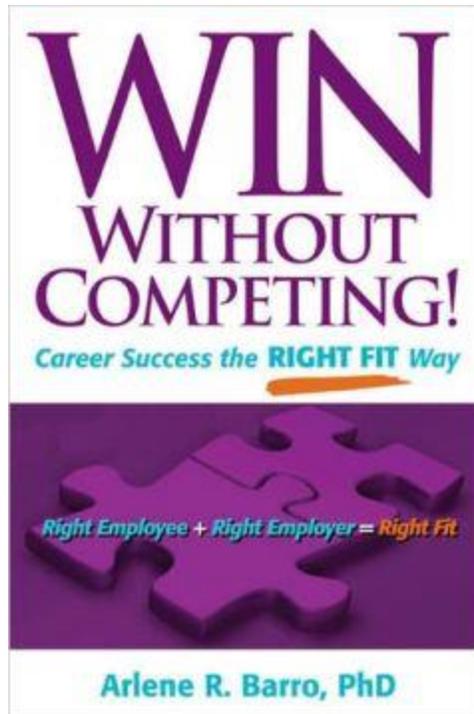


Conquering Stress! With Dr. Arlene – Steve Jobs’ Unique Decisions Cause Stress



By Dr. Arlene Barro

Steve Jobs’ unique combination of behaviors including indecision, delay, and denial determined his fate. Walter Isaacson’s biography *Steve Jobs: Not Exceptionally Smart, But a Genius* is an apt description of Jobs who died of pancreatic cancer on October 5, 2011. The biography, published after his death, was the number one bestseller on Amazon for 2011. Aaron Sorkin adapted the book for his screenplay *Steve Jobs* which premiered in 2015.

An analysis of Jobs’ behavior will illuminate the shock, anxiety, and stress Jobs created after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I unraveled the untold story during my investigation.

Jobs’ Fatal Flaws

It is not uncommon for geniuses to be flawed. They see the world through their own lens. On one hand, this sets the stage for their creativity, on the other hand, it could impact their life and death decisions, either positively or negatively.

Dissecting Jobs’ behavior will reveal “missing links.” This could include “common sense,” which is not common because it is either learned or not learned behavior; basic knowledge, i.e., smoking causes

cancer, and simple analytical skills, i.e., drinking hot tea could burn your mouth. And then there are erroneous assumptions and self-talk in which Jobs knows “best.” As for seeing the obvious, he was clueless. Now we are ready to dig deeper and focus on specific behaviors which had an impact on his health.

- **Fruitarian Diet**

Jobs was a fruitarian. He ate fruit, seeds, nuts, vegetables, and grains. For periods of time he would eat apples and carrots. Sometimes, he would only eat one or the other. In Steve Jobs’ biography, Isaacson reports that Jobs’ face actually turned a sunset orange. The orange hue is indicative of eating too many carrots.

Angela Haunt, assistant managing editor, *USNews.com*, Feb. 7, 2013, discusses the reason why *Ashton Kutcher’s Fruitarian Diet, What Went Wrong*. Kutcher preparing to play Steve Jobs, in an upcoming movie, decided to become a fruitarian. After one month, Kutcher was hospitalized. His pancreatic levels were out of whack. Fruitarian diet, begone.

For your metabolism to function properly, you need the right amount and type of proteins fats, and carbohydrates. Protein is not stored in the body. Carbohydrates and fats are. According to Isaacson, Jobs did not have sufficient fat and protein in his body to stay healthy. Moreover, Jobs’ colleagues told Isaacson that he had noticeable body odor. Jobs showered infrequently. He decided that his body would detoxify itself.

Jobs made an erroneous assumption. In order for natural detoxification to occur, you have to eat complete proteins which include red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, soybeans and quinoa. Each of these foods contain an adequate portion of the nine amino acids to be labeled completed protein. Jobs ate almost no complete proteins. What is the significance of that? Protein is a building block for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood. Moreover, to make enzymes, hormones, and other body chemicals, you need protein. How could Steve Jobs not know what he was doing to himself?

Remember the Food Pyramid? We now have a *Food Guide Pyramid* and *Choose My Plate*. The United States Department of Agriculture developed these visuals so that children learn how to eat nutritious meals early in life. Are you eating healthy?

Stacy Kennedy, MPH, RD, reported in *Insight* from Dana Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Medical School, May 11, 2015, *Sugar and Cancer: What is the Relationship?* Studies have shown that diets high in fructose or glucose increase pancreatic cancer by 25-29%.

Jobs’ diet after his diagnosis is referred to as a special diet, which Apple wanted to keep secret. Acupuncture has been mentioned too, as well as herbs. Alice Park in *healthland.time.com*, Oct. 5, 2011,

discusses *The Pancreatic Cancer That Killed Steve Jobs*, the secret trip he took to Switzerland for radiation-based hormone treatments to kill the cancer.

- Alternative Reality

George Stephanopolis interviews on *abcnews.go.com*, Oct. 24, 2011, Walter Isaacson on *Steve Jobs: Not Exceptionally Smart, But a Genius*, Isaacson discusses what he learned from interviewing Jobs and 40 of his colleagues. A memorable part of the interview focused on Jobs living in an alternative reality. His colleagues described him as bending facts to his will and stubbornly adhering to his beliefs. What prompted Jobs to soak his bare feet in Apple's corporate toilets to relieve his stress? Inexplicable!

Ponder: How did Jobs' mental state of alternative reality influence his management of pancreatic cancer? In my opinion, significantly. I will share more shortly.

- Perfectionism, Indecision and Delay

Sarah Wilson on *SarahWilson.com*, July 17, 2013, reflected on *What Steve Jobs' Perfectionism Taught Me*. Wilson excerpted fascinating anecdotes from Isaacson's book. "Jobs lived a spartan lifestyle: chest of drawers and mattress in his bedroom, card table and folding chairs for guests."

Why did he not buy a sofa? Perfectionism? Here's what his wife Laurene told Isaacson. "We spoke about furniture in theory for eight years. We spent a lot of time asking ourselves, 'What is the purpose of a sofa?'" I do not think that this anecdote reflects Jobs' behavior as a perfectionist. I see it as a great example of indecision and delay. Remember those missing links. He functions as a genius. The lower levels of intellectual functioning are beyond him. His wife enabled him. She should have said, "We should buy a sofa for people to sit on." She could have also told him that he was behaving like the emperor in *The Emperor Has No Clothes* by Hans Christian Anderson. Jobs believed he had something to discuss. He did not. The foolish Emperor believed he was wearing a magnificent outfit, as he walked through the town naked.

In a hospital at the end of his life, a pulmonologist tried to put a mask over his face when he was deeply sedated. Isaacson writes, "Jobs ripped it off and mumbled that he hated the design and refused to wear it. Though barely alive to speak, he ordered them to bring five different options for the mask and he would pick a design he liked." I visualize a proud man who wants to be in charge even when he is close to death. I also see "Steve Jobs the child" demanding what he wants.

How did Jobs' fatal flaws impact the decision he made in managing pancreatic cancer? Let us find out.

Jobs Knows Best

When Jobs was accused at Apple of being indecisive he shot back, "I am thoughtful." An examination of Jobs' behavior, after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, reveals the Jobs that I portrayed.

In 2003, he learned that he had pancreatic cancer. At that time, he refused to have surgery. Why? He told his biographer Isaacson before he died that he delayed surgery because it was too invasive. Is that the real reason or was he in denial? The consequences of delay were clear. The cancer could spread. Jobs, undaunted, tried to kill the cancer as if it were a fly. Herbs, acupuncture, the secret diet, and radiation did not work.

In 2004, Jobs had surgery at Stanford Medical Center, at which time he had a modified Whipple procedure. The cancer had metastasized. They removed the right side of his pancreas, the gallbladder, part of the stomach, the bile duct and small intestine. Jobs had a rare form of pancreatic cancer, neuroendocrine cancer, which refers to the type of tumor. If his cancer had not spread, he could have lived a long time because the tumors are slow growing.

In 2009, Jobs had a liver transplant to replace his cancerous liver. This extended his life for two more years.

I believe that Jobs did what he was accustomed to doing. He lived in an alternative reality and did things his way. Before his death, Jobs told Isaacson that he regretted his decisions to try alternative therapies and delay his surgery. He finally realized that Jobs does not always know “best.”

Jobs' Cancer Legacy

How did Jobs discover his cancer? He had a history of gastrointestinal problems and noticed more issues and sought a medical evaluation, at which time they found the cancer. It is very difficult to believe that he lived on a fruitarian diet for many years, given that he had gastrointestinal problems. Moreover, he should have had an epiphany, when he was told that he had pancreatic cancer: he was not eating a healthy diet. Instead, he stayed the course: not listening to experts and declining surgery. Avoid Jobs' deadly erroneous assumption: repeating the same mistake, expecting a different result.

Dr. James Kim, Cancer Surgeon, at City of Hope Medical Center in Duarte, said ... “It’s reasonable to assume that Jobs’ survival chances would have been greatly improved had he just hit his cancer hard from the get-go.” “You’d expect the CEO of Apple to be more informed,” said Dr. Kim. “Someone with a scientific mind like he had would be expected to be driven by evidence. And it is clear with this type of cancer that surgery would improve his survival chances.” There’s a chance,” said Dr. Kim, “that Steve Jobs would be alive today if he had had surgery right away.” (Quoted from Patrick May, award-winning writer, *MercuryNews.com*, Oct. 20, 2011, updated Aug.13, 2016, *Cancer Experts Say Apple’s CEO Steve Jobs Could Still Be Alive Had He Had Surgery Earlier.*)

Steve Jobs’ approach to treating his cancer caused him a lot of stress and everyone who loved him. Even his family could not convince him to have surgery, when he was first diagnosed with cancer. He left an outstanding professional legacy. If only that person who created that legacy could have managed his treatment plan, he might have beaten cancer. You might be able to do, what Jobs could not. Thrive!

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