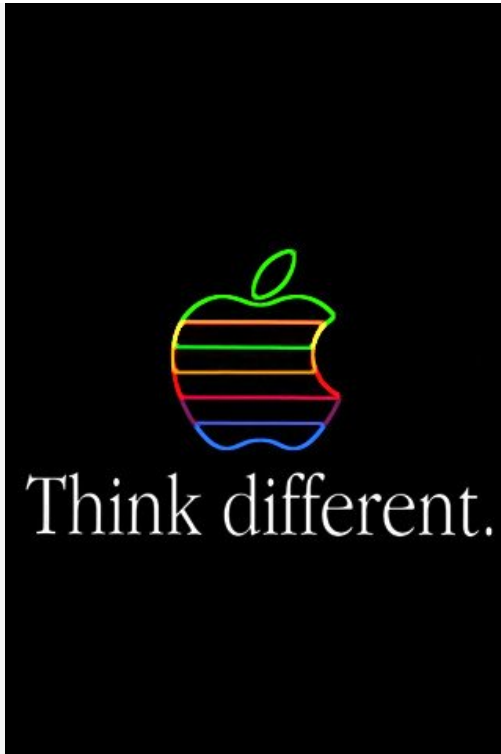


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WHAT STEVE JOBS MEANT BY "THINK DIFFERENT"

Some day, historians may come to recognize Apple's "Think Different" campaign (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Think_different) as one of the most important marketing campaigns of all time.

"Think Different" was a deeply personal expression of Steve Jobs' most hard-earned life lessons. Steve had a challenging and difficult life, where he often found himself alone, fighting against the grain of conventional people and conventional wisdom. Contrary to how some have portrayed him, Steve was not driven by ego or any sense of self-righteousness. He paid close attention to his moment-by-moment life experience, and made rigorously-tested, logical conclusions about what he saw. As the Buddha said in his final words: "Be a lamp unto yourself, be a refuge to yourself. Take yourself to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp; hold fast to the Truth as a refuge. Look not for a refuge in anyone beside yourself." These teachings guided how Steve lived each day of his life.

Whenever Steve stopped paying attention to his own awareness and followed the conventional wisdom of others instead, trouble usually followed. For example, the Apple /// introduced in 1981 was a classic example of a product designed through conventional market and customer analysis. It was the only major new Apple computer that was a pure commercial failure and major disappointment to customers.

Later in life, Steve became convinced by his wealthy peers that he needed to have a billionaire's apartment on New York's Central Park West. He bought a penthouse in New York's legendary Dakota, where Steve's idol John Lennon and Yoko Ono lived. He hired I.M. Pei to design the interior and spent several million dollars on the renovation. Steve never moved in. Years later, when he and his wife bought their family home in a middle-class Palo Alto neighborhood, Steve found the greatest joy living a simple, spare, almost monastic life.

Steve truly came into himself when he honored his deepest, innermost, quietest callings—what he referred to as "whispers." In describing what he meant by "Think Different," Steve explained that many people limit themselves by believing self-limiting, incorrect thoughts—and create lifetimes rooted in incorrect thinking. They manifest small lives for themselves, living inside the walls built by others; walls that were put up for practical reasons originally but may no longer serve anyone. In a 1994 interview, he explained:

"When you grow up you tend to get told the world is the way it is and your

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life is just to live your life inside the world. Try not to bash into the walls too much. Try to have a nice family life, have fun, save a little money.

"That's a very limited life. Life can be much broader once you discover one simple fact, and that is – everything around you that you call life, was made up by people that were no smarter than you. And you can change it, you can influence it, you can build your own things that other people can use.

"The minute that you understand that you can poke life and actually something will, you know if you push in, something will pop out the other side, that you can change it, you can mold it. That's maybe the most important thing. It's to shake off this erroneous notion that life is there and you're just gonna live in it, versus embrace it, change it, improve it, make your mark upon it.

"I think that's very important and however you learn that, once you learn it, you'll want to change life and make it better, cause it's kind of messed up, in a lot of ways. Once you learn that, you'll never be the same again."

Steve recognized that when you look at the empirical truth of what's going on in reality, you can see vast possibilities that others can't. In Buddhism, this is called "Beginners Mind." In the West, people hate being a naive "beginner" at anything; most people want to be experts. However, Buddhist practitioners observe that—when given a complex problem—"an Expert will see only two or three possible answers to the problem. The Beginner looks at the same problem and sees a limitless number of possibilities."

When you look at a situation and see possibilities that are not visible to people stuck in conventional thinking, most people will be unimpressed and dismissive. Conventional people tend to see someone with a broader, deeper awareness as an egotistical maverick. Or simply as a Crazy Person. They see their own ego projections and fears in the person who thinks bigger, and they mistake their own projections for the bigger thinker.

Apple launched its "Think Different" campaign in 1997 with a national TV ad that offered a loving tribute to people with deeper, broader awareness. The ad, which was written in part by Steve Jobs, began "Here's to the Crazy Ones." (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rwsuXHA7RA>)

I recently came across a more detailed explanation of what Steve meant by "Think Different" and "Crazy Ones." There was a longer, richer version of the original TV ad copy:

"Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes.

"The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them.

"About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward.

"Maybe they have to be crazy.

"How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written? Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

"We make tools for these kinds of people.

"While some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do."

What Steve was saying is that it's not JUST that people with bigger visions are dismissed by others as crazy. To have faith in your own deepest, personal experience, and to follow your deepest, highest calling, you HAVE to be a little crazy! :-> Crazy in a good way.

As Steve pointed out to us all in his richly-layered-life-philosophy-camouflaged-as-marketing-campaign: "How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written? Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?"

What Steve Jobs meant by "Think Different" wasn't just about having the courage to use one's own God-given gifts fully. It was also about the courage to "push the human race forward." To keep a fire burning for the human race. To embrace what is possible for us humans with idealism, compassion, and wisdom.


The human race has been through a staggering evolution since we started out as protozoa. Anyone who believes that humanity has stopped evolving is stuck in his or her own self-limited thinking. "Think Different" was one way that Steve Jobs gave back to each of us our courage and birthright to be a "light onto ourself" for the ongoing care and evolution of humanity.


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Christopher Sicuranza, David Ostrosky, Brian Rendel and 7 others like this.

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 **George Woods Baker** Brilliant. So well said.
April 7, 2012 at 10:42am · Unlike · 1

 **Dolores Du Bois** For everyone who heard – "Why can't you be like everybody else!?" all through childhood, and – "You're just not a team player" at work, and – "...because, that's the way it's always been done..." Hey, you were right and they were wrong!
April 7, 2012 at 10:58am · Unlike · 2

 **Nigel Searle** It's no coincidence, I think, that IBM had used the motto "Think" for many years. (Thomas J. Watson coined the motto at NCR more than 100 years ago, took it to IBM with him, and they're still using it today.
At a time when IBM was trying to dominate/dictate the PC business, perhaps Steve was also saying, "The Mac is not your father's computer – and Apple is not your father's company."
April 7, 2012 at 1:20pm · Like

 **Jonathan Rotenberg** Nigel – Yes, I totally agree. I put together a brief slide show about the history of "Think Different" from Thomas Watson in 1914 to the Apple campaign in 1997. <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150738299599889.417437.703419888&type=1>.
Ano... See More



HAPPY BIRTHDAY APPLE: THINK DIFFERENT!

Click on each photo for a slideshow about the history of "Think Different!"
By: [Jonathan Rotenberg](#)
Photos: 5

April 7, 2012 at 1:27pm · Like · Remove Preview

 **Nigel Searle** I had only glanced at your slide show and hadn't realized the first couple of slides related to IBM. Nor had I realized that the Apple campaign was as late as 1997. I'd assumed it went back to the mid- or late-1980s.
April 7, 2012 at 1:34pm · Like

 **Jonathan Rotenberg** FYI, everyone, Here are 56 of the "Think Different" ads. <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150738739639889.417482.703419888&type=1>



HAPPY BIRTHDAY APPLE: THINK DIFFERENT CAMPAIGN

Each of the legendary "crazy ones" selected for Apple's "Think Different" campaign... See More
By: [Jonathan Rotenberg](#)
Photos: 56

April 11, 2012 at 12:57am · Like · Remove Preview

 **Jonathan Rotenberg** Also, here is the "Crazy Ones" TV ad in Steve Jobs' own voice. This is the ad that launched Apple's "Think Different" campaign in 1997.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rwsuXHA7RA>





Apple Steve Jobs The Crazy Ones - NEVER BEFORE AIRED 1997


www.youtube.com

Steve Jobs narrates the first Think different commercial "Here's to the Crazy On... See More

April 11, 2012 at 12:58am · Like · Remove Preview

 **Matt Bell** I miss adverbs.
April 11, 2012 at 8:01am via mobile · Like

 **Nigel Searle** @Matt. I'd like to believe it was a decision made careful.
April 11, 2012 at 9:22am · Like

 **Jonathan Rotenberg** From Walter Isaacson: "They debated the grammatical issue: If 'different' was supposed to modify the verb 'think,' it should be an adverb, as in 'think differently.' But Jobs insisted that he wanted 'different' to be used as a NOUN, as in 'think victory' or 'think beauty.' Also, it echoed colloquial use, as in 'think big.' Jobs later explained, 'We discussed whether it was correct before we ran it. It's grammatical, if you think about what we're trying to say. It's not think the same, it's think different. Think a little different, think a lot different, think

different. 'Think differently' wouldn't hit the meaning for me." Note that Merriam-Webster includes several definition of 'think' as a noun, e.g.: "Let me go have a think about that."

April 11, 2012 at 9:34am · Like



Nigel Searle From an advertising/marketing point of view, "Think different." is way better than "Think differently." But from a grammatical point of view, it requires a significant contortion, which is best explained by realizing that there's English English and there's American English – and then there's Californian English 😊

April 11, 2012 at 9:59am · Like



Jonathan Rotenberg Steve's choice of 'different' rather than 'differently' can also be understood from a meditation perspective. Steve was a disciplined meditator. One of the reasons why people meditate is to move outside the realm of conventional thought into the realm of awareness or mindfulness. "Think differently," while slightly shifted, would still be stuck in the trap of conventional thinking. "Think different" can be understand as shifting one's attention to a place OUTSIDE of conventional thinking. In other words, move your attention or awareness from conventional thinking to the realm of "Different." In meditation, this is called "samadhi" or "concentration practice." Meditation focuses the mind on a point of concentration, such as sounds, the breath or the wish for others' wellbeing ('Metta'). The word "Different" in isolation has no particular meaning, other than (in this case), 'not conventional'. The multi-year 'Think Different' marketing campaign filled this word-vessel 'Different' with meaning. Using examples of great leaders like Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Pablo Picasso, the Dalai Lama, and John Lennon, Steve Jobs made clear that 'Different' was pointing to something VERY deep and profound.

April 11, 2012 at 9:59am · Like · 🍌 1



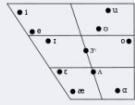
Jonathan Rotenberg Hey, dude, what are you saying about Californians? Get real!! :->

April 11, 2012 at 10:01am · Like



Nigel Searle I was trying to find a typical Californian expression and look what I found. California English is a recognized dialect!

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_English



California English - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

en.wikipedia.org

California English (or Californian, Californian English) is a dialect of the Eng... [See More](#)

April 11, 2012 at 10:12am · Like · Remove Preview



Jonathan Rotenberg Fer sure fer sure! :->

April 11, 2012 at 10:14am via mobile · Like · 🍌 1



Dolores Du Bois Ah-sum! (rhymes with "possum")

April 11, 2012 at 8:39pm · Like



Nigel Searle @Dolores. There was a restaurant in Keene, NH (closed now) whose name was taken from its address, "176

Main" Street. (It claims to be the widest main street in the world, btw.) Some marketing genius (no, not me; a different marketing genius) figured ou... [See More](#)

April 11, 2012 at 8:54pm · Like



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