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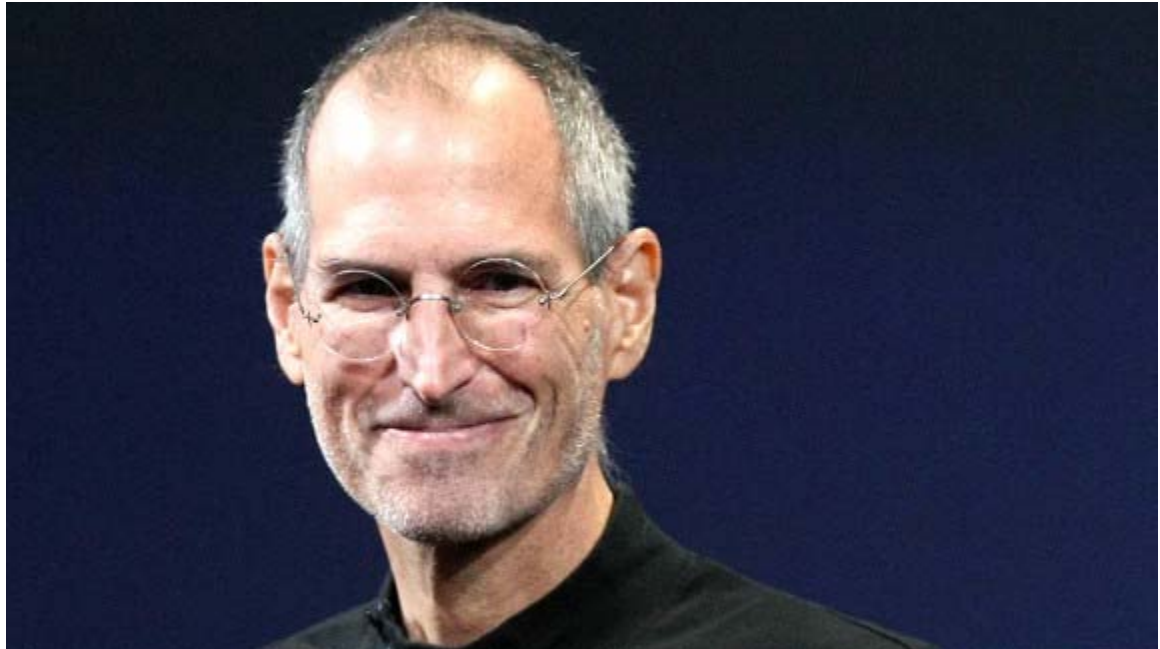
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In the company of genius

By Lance Armstrong
Special to ESPN.com

The last email exchange I had with Steve Jobs started with me wishing him a happy birthday on Feb. 24. He replied:

*Lance,
Thanks.
I'm just
happy
to be
on this
side of
the grass!
Best,
Steve*



Steve Jobs touched many lives, including that of cancer survivor Lance Armstrong.

After his death Wednesday, I know what they're going to write. They're going to say Steve Jobs "lost his battle with pancreatic cancer." But that's not true. Steve, like every football coach who ever lived, didn't lose his battle. He just ran out of time.

REMEMBERING



While Steve Jobs' astounding legacy of creativity and innovation will never be foremost connected with the sports industry, his impact on our little corner of the world is profound all the same. [Mark Kreidler »](#)

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Steve bought more time than anybody could have ever imagined. He was diagnosed in late 2003 and given three to six months to live. And yet, he lived eight more years. More amazing, in the time he bought, Steve Jobs did the finest work of his life -- a life filled to the rafters with fine work. He introduced the iPhone. He introduced the iPad. All *after* being given a window to die.

This is a man who embodied survivorship. He had that fighting spirit. Not just with cancer, but life. This is a guy who started a company, Apple, and then, at 30, was *fired* by that company. That alone would change you forever. When Apple rehired him -- after he'd started Next and Pixar -- its stock was at \$2. This week, it's over \$375. Apple was done. Absolutely done. And he brought it back.

It was the same with cancer. He took cancer on with all his will and considerable brains. Nothing was out of the question. He would go anywhere, see anyone, talk to anyone, to fight the disease. He would talk to a mainstream oncologist, to Dr. Dean Ornish, to the Dalai Lama. If it was spiritual, dietetic, medical, scientific, physical, it didn't matter. He explored them all.

And yet, while he's doing all that fighting, he's creating products that have changed our lives forever.

When I retired in 2007, a friend of mine said, "Before you do anything, take a year and go sit and talk with people you admire." Steve Jobs was one of the first people I sought out.

I just called his office, out of the blue, and asked if I could have lunch. Next thing I know I was at the Apple headquarters in Cupertino, Calif., meeting Steve Jobs himself.

We had some common bonds. We had the disease. We both never met our birth father. Neither of us had a college degree. We both like to bike a little. And yet we never talked about any of that.

It was an unforgettable two hours. Steve was a very tough guy, a tough character, ridiculously smart, very interested in the science of computers and the science of his disease. (I remember he ate a strictly vegan diet. I mean, strict. Looked awful.) You knew you were in the company of genius. You knew you were with a person who would be hard to get to know. He was, and forever will be, an enigma. You knew it would take a lot of lunches, a lot of conversation, a lot of emails to really crack this person's shell. I respected that.

We emailed now and again after that. He had the easiest email to figure out in the world. His phone must've practically exploded every day, but he never changed it.

I remember once being on a beach in Mexico and a fat guy walked by in a T-shirt that showed a guy on the toilet and one word: "IPOOD." I took a picture of him with my iPhone and sent it to Steve. If a guy can laugh hysterically in an email, he did.

Right now at Livestrong, we're working on an app that will give people who've just been diagnosed with cancer a place to get *tons* of information, right at their fingertips. At the most desperate hour of their lives, they will be able to flip on their iPhones, their iPads, their MacBooks and read about the very disease that claimed the devices' inventor.



Seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong shared more than a love of cycling and a battle with cancer with friend Steve Jobs.

I'll miss my friend, Steve. The man will forever be a world icon. I drove my son's carpool home Thursday, and the boys were talking about Steve. They were betting he'd be buried with all his inventions.

I'm friends with the new CEO of Apple, Tim Cook. Great guy, smart guy, but I don't envy him.

Would you want to be the guy who replaced Edison?
