

People at the top of their professional games are thought to be quite self-centered and sure of themselves. But one of the best-known tech figures of all time had a remarkably poignant take on life and humanity a year before he passed away.

In 2010, Steve Jobs had been diagnosed with cancer, and had cut down on his work commitments. At that point, he had written an email to himself, and sent it via what else, but his iPad. The email ruminated on the fact that most things in Jobs' life weren't controlled by him. He said that he didn't grow most of the food he ate, used a language he didn't develop, listened to music which he didn't write, was governed by laws which he didn't come up with.

This led Jobs to a beautiful conclusion, which was the closing line of his email: I love and admire my species, living and dead, and am totally dependent on them for my life and well-being.

One of the greatest entrepreneurs of all time, who'd created what is now the world's most valuable company, and whose products had touched millions of lives, was putting things in perspective, and saying that most of his life had been built by other members of his species. Sure, he might've created beautiful products and tremendous amounts of shareholder value, but Jobs was acknowledging that he had stood on shoulders of giants. And if Steve Jobs felt that the outcome of his life had been largely determined by the human species, it does take a lot of pressure off ordinary folks like you and me.

Here's the full text of the letter:

From: Steve Jobs, [sjobs@apple.com](mailto:sjobs@apple.com) To: Steve Jobs, [sjobs@apple.com](mailto:sjobs@apple.com) Date: Thursday, September 2, 2010 at 11:08PM

I grow little of the food I eat, and of the little I do grow I did not breed or perfect the seeds.

I do not make any of my own clothing.

I speak a language I did not invent or refine. I did not discover the mathematics I use.

I am protected by freedoms and laws I did not conceive of or legislate, and do not enforce or adjudicate.

I am moved by music I did not create myself.

When I needed medical attention, I was helpless to help myself survive.

I did not invent the transistor, the microprocessor, object oriented programming, or most of the technology I work with.

I love and admire my species, living and dead, and am totally dependent on them for my life and well being.

Sent from my iPad