



The Miracle of iCapitalism

by **Michelle Malkin** ([more by this author](#))

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Here is your high-resolution teachable moment of the week: anti-capitalist, anti-corporate extremists of "Occupy Wall Street" mourning Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs without a trace of irony.

While the Kamp Alinsky Kids ditch school to moan about their massive student debt, parade around in zombie costumes and whine about evil corporations over poached Wi-Fi connections, it's the doers and producers and wealth creators like Jobs who change the world. They are the gifted 1 percent whom the "99 percenters" mob seeks to demonize, marginalize and tax out of existence.

Inherent in the American success story of the iMac/iPhone/iPad is a powerful lesson about the fundamentals of capitalism. The "Occupiers" chant "people over profit." They call for "caring" over "corporations."

But the pursuit of profits empowers people beyond the bounds of imagination.

I blog on an iMac. When I travel, I bring my MacBook Pro. I Tweet news links from my iPhone. My kids are learning Photoshop and GarageBand on our Macs; they use metronome, dictation, video and camera apps daily. I use the technology for business, pleasure, social networking, raising awareness of the missing, finding recipes and even tuning a ukulele.

None of the countless people involved in conceiving these products and bringing them to market "care" about me. They pursued their own self-interests. Through the spontaneous order of capitalism, they enriched themselves -- and the world.

One of my favorite economics essays from which I've drawn bottomless inspiration is Leonard Read's "I, Pencil." He turned a mundane writing instrument into an elementary

study of free-market capitalism. What goes for the pencil goes for any of the products Jobs introduced.

"I have a profound lesson to teach," Read wrote in the voice of a metaphorical lead pencil. "I can teach this lesson better than can an automobile or an airplane or a mechanical dishwasher because -- well, because I am seemingly so simple. Simple? Yet, not a single person on the face of this earth knows how to make me."

Read traces the family tree of the pencil from the Oregon loggers who harvest its cedar wood, to the California millworkers who cut the wood into thin slats, to Mississippi refinery workers, to the Dutch East Indies farmers who produce an oil used to make erasers. All of these people, and many more at the periphery of the process, have special knowledge about their life's work in their separate corners of the earth. But none by himself has the singular knowledge or ability to give birth to a pencil. Few will ever come in contact with the others who make the production of that pencil possible.

It's not because they "care about each other" that they cooperate to deliver any one good. It's the result of self-interest, multiplied millions of times over.

Read illuminates: "There is a fact still more astounding: The absence of a master mind, of anyone dictating or forcibly directing these countless actions which bring me into being. No trace of such a person can be found. Instead, we find the Invisible Hand at work." This spontaneous "configuration of human energies" is repeated endlessly in our daily lives. Think of the countless and diverse people involved in producing a Slinky, jump rope or baseball, a diaper, refrigerator or Boeing 747.

And, of course, an iMac, iPhone or iPad.

Appreciating this voluntary configuration of human energies, Read argued, is key to possessing "an absolutely essential ingredient for freedom: a faith in free people. Freedom is impossible without this faith." Indeed. Without that faith, we are susceptible to the force of class-warfare mobs and the arrogance of command-and-control bureaucrats in Washington who believe the role of private American entrepreneurs, producers and wealth generators is to "grow the economy" and who "think at some point you have made enough money."

The progressives who want to bring down "Wall Street" will snipe that Jobs was one of

"theirs," not "ours."

He belonged to no one. He was transcendently committed to excellence and beauty and innovation. And yes, he made gobs of money pursuing it all while benefiting hundreds of millions of people around the world whom he never met, but who shed a deep river of tears upon learning of his death this week.

From "I, Pencil" to iPhone, such is the profound, everlasting miracle of iCapitalism -- a triumph of individualism over collectivism, freedom over force and markets over master planning. To borrow an old Apple slogan: It just works.

Mrs. Malkin is author of [Unhinged](#) (Regnery) and ["Culture of Corruption: Obama and his Team of Tax Cheats, Crooks & Cronies"](#) (Regnery 2009).

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