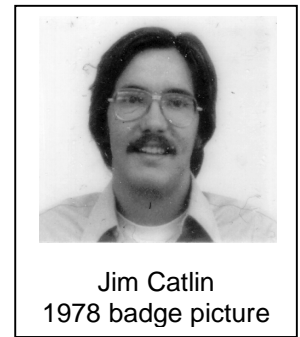


Rule #7 – David Packard

Jim Catlin (HP 1978 – 1995)

It had been less than a year since joining HP and my wife and I found ourselves attending a formal dinner to honor and welcome the newly hired engineers. In reality, neither of us wanted to be there. Formal events – linen tablecloths, assigned seating, flower centerpieces – were just not our thing and on top of it all my wife was exhausted from an unusually taxing and dirty day.



After a short meet-and-greet period we were instructed to find our names at our preassigned places. Quicker than most we happened upon our names and immediately went around the table to see who would soon be joining us. To our right was a name I recognized – another new hire and his wife. To our left was another name I recognized – the senior engineer who had organized and hosted the entire event and his wife! And then across the table was a name I shuttered to recognize. There were the names of David and Lucille Packard!



This did not make sense to me. I expected that the honored speaker and the host for the evening would be seated next to each other at some prominent dais in front of the room but here we were just sitting at an unremarkable table for eight in the middle of a room of about twenty other tables. No dais. Just tables in a room.

Early into the dinner my paralyzing anxieties about topics of conversation with the Packards quickly vanished. It turned out that we never spoke a word over dinner. We never even made eye contact over dinner. We simply could not do it because between us was an enormous floral centerpiece that, incredibly, towered higher than Dave's own legendary stature. This formidable barrier forced us to talk only to those seated on our left and on our right. Unfortunately, those on our left and right chose to engage with the Packards and not with the Catlins. We became the loneliest people in the room and, given our slight annoyance at being there in the first place, we couldn't wait to leave.

At the end of dinner Dave was introduced. He pushed away from our table, walked through an admiring crowd, and took his place at the podium. As I studied my wristwatch I paid no attention to what Dave was saying. We just wanted to go home. We were irked. We were humiliated.

With the speech over the host thanked Dave while he still stood at the podium and he dismissed us from the evening. We stood, finally, and made our way through the crowd toward the exit.

As we walked I discovered that Dave's trajectory from the podium was not back to our dinner table which was now far behind me. He was quickening his pace to intercept me as we made a beeline for the exit! This was dismaying to all of those in the crowd that tried to shake his hand as he quickly passed. As he neared his target, me, countless faces in the room stared at me in disbelief. I imagine that the expression on my face looked the same.

As I looked up at him – I'm 6'1" myself – he extended his hand to me and, nearly terrified, I extended mine in response. With uncommon eye contact that expressed deep sincerity he said, "I want to apologize for your experience tonight."

As I failed to find the right words to reply, he continued with an explanation. "It was wrong for the host to seat himself next to me. You should have been there. This evening was to honor engineers like you. I will make sure that this never happens again."

It is at moments like these that time slows down. I looked at our clasped hands. I looked around at the many quizzical faces in the backdrop of this scene. I tried to find something to say and, again, I failed.

Sensing my ongoing dysfunction, Dave graciously continued, his words measured for emphasis, "I am so glad that you have joined us. Welcome to HP." As we broke our grip I was struck by the fact that he was determined to maintain eye contact. He smiled broadly, satisfied, and turned to greet others gathering behind him.

Years later when I ran across "Dave Packard's 11 Simple Rules" – essentially his management philosophy condensed – I smiled my way through the list remembering the encounter. When I got to rule #7 I laughed out loud: "#7. Try to understand the other person" **See following page for the Packard 11 Simple Rules.**

Unbelievably, that evening not only had he taken notice but he had understood. And importantly, he took action. It served to inspire me during my years in management like no other training I had had at HP.

Jim Catlin
Oct, 2018

Stanford Park Division, R&D, 1978-1981 (8683A/B, 8684A/B, 8901B)
Spokane Division, R&D, 1981-1995 (8902A, 8958A, 8920A)

Dave Packard's 11 Simple Rules

- 1. Think first of the other fellow.** This is THE foundation — the first requisite — for getting along with others. And it is the one truly difficult accomplishment you must make. Gaining this, the rest will be "a breeze."
- 2. Build up the other person's sense of importance.** When we make the other person seem less important, we frustrate one of his deepest urges. Allow him to feel equality or superiority, and we can easily get along with him.
- 3. Respect the other man's personality rights.** Respect as something sacred the other fellow's right to be different from you. No two personalities are ever molded by precisely the same forces.
- 4. Give sincere appreciation.** If we think someone has done a thing well, we should never hesitate to let him know it. WARNING: This does not mean promiscuous use of obvious flattery. Flattery with most intelligent people gets exactly the reaction it deserves — contempt for the egotistical "phony" who stoops to it.
- 5. Eliminate the negative.** Criticism seldom does what its user intends, for it invariably causes resentment. The tiniest bit of disapproval can sometimes cause a resentment which will rankle — to your disadvantage — for years.
- 6. Avoid openly trying to reform people.** Every man knows he is imperfect, but he doesn't want someone else trying to correct his faults. If you want to improve a person, help him to embrace a higher working goal — a standard, an ideal — and he will do his own "making over" far more effectively than you can do it for him.
- 7. Try to understand the other person.** How would you react to similar circumstances? When you begin to see the "whys" of him you can't help but get along better with him.
- 8. Check first impressions.** We are especially prone to dislike some people on first sight because of some vague resemblance (of which we are usually unaware) to someone else whom we have had reason to dislike. Follow Abraham Lincoln's famous self-instruction: "I do not like that man; therefore I shall get to know him better."
- 9. Take care with the little details.** Watch your smile, your tone of voice, how you use your eyes, the way you greet people, the use of nicknames and remembering faces, names and dates. Little things add polish to your skill in dealing with people. Constantly, deliberately think of them until they become a natural part of your personality.
- 10. Develop genuine interest in people.** You cannot successfully apply the foregoing suggestions unless you have a sincere desire to like, respect and be helpful to others. Conversely, you cannot build genuine interest in people until you have experienced the pleasure of working with them in an atmosphere characterized by mutual liking and respect.
- 11. Keep it up.** That's all — just keep it up!

Catlin P.S. The connections between the Stanford Engineering School and HP have always been very close. In fact, Bill and Dave borrowed \$500 from Engineering Professor Fred Terman to start their company!

Chuck House P.S. They did not borrow \$500 from Terman. Hewlett had \$538 saved up.

Editor's Note:

Jim's remembrance of the Host of his new-engineer dinner hogging the attention of Dave and Lucile Packard was not unusual in gatherings of HP people, managers were often looking to make their names known to top executives.

In my role as Marcom Manager for the Stanford Park Division in the 70s – 80s, I did a lot of cheerleading to try and sensitize top managers to avoid their own lower managers, and give their attention to customers attending, or in this case, to the new engineers who were the guests. Here was one of my "soapbox" rants.

The old coach is the one who joins customer professional organizations and brings along the new player to the monthly meetings to introduce him/her to real-life breathing customers. They might even shame a manager or two from marketing or the lab to come with them. Sure, some of the meeting agendas are turkeys, but that's the way things are in human events, some super, a lot good, and a lot bad.

Let me give one final example. Several years ago I attended a customer seminar in an HP field office. At the end of the day, at the wine and cheese get-together, customers were standing around the sides of the room quietly eating their hors-d'oeuvres and sipping their wine, while a number of HP factory engineers and field engineers were gathered in an animated group in the center. Now the wine and cheese was a very friendly way to finish the customer training, but we were being anything but friendly. It is what I call HP-swarming, and it happens all the time.

But now, an HP Vice-President who happens in town comes into the room. Now the entire HP gang swarms to talk with the V-P. Well, that's certainly natural from a human point of view. I mean, how often do you get the ear of an HP VP in a casual setting? But of course, I claim that the District Manager present, and certainly the VP should have taken the coaching role and prodded all the HP people to break it up and get out there with the real purpose of the day, those wonderful, shy customers standing by themselves.

Click [HERE](#) to read my memo of 1986.

John Minck