

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM JERRY MCGINNIS

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## JERRY'S BEGINNING

Mechanical engineer from University of Illinois

Moved to Pittsburgh to work for Westinghouse – Westinghouse was a powerhouse. Jerry once told me that, after joining Westinghouse he realized that he had to get much better at his craft, so he went back to Pitt and got his master's in mechanical engineering.

### Lesson 1: DEVELOP YOUR CORE TALENT AND BE WORLD CLASS AT IT.

While at Westinghouse, he quickly progressed to be manager for the biomedical team but felt like he was too far from the patients that he was designing products to help, so he left and took a job at Allegheny General Hospital to head their biomedical research group working on an artificial heart.

### Lesson 2: INNOVATION IS NOT AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE. GET HANDS ON WITH THE PEOPLE THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO HELP. KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER!

While he worked at AGH, he was looking for something that he could commercialize, and that opportunity had to meet 2 important criteria

1. Had to be a big enough problem with an acute pain
2. Had to be something that he could actually execute / solve thereby generating real value.

### Lesson 3: SOLVE A BIG ENOUGH PROBLEM WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

He finally found his first opportunity when he worked with Dr. George McGovern, an extremely well known and respected heart surgeon. You see, when a patient went under anesthesia, they needed to be intubated and ventilated. This required that a tube be inserted to the patient's throat and a air-filled cuff inflated to create a seal so that the patient could be ventilated during surgery.

Well, that cuff pushed on the tissue in the airway and, because that seal applied pressure, it also restricted airflow in the airway and damaged the tissue. Well, Jerry invented a device that he later called Paq q q mÚ e a f ai ty whor th ventil d

Lesson 4: ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEMANDS COMMITMENT AND MANY LONG HOURS OF WORK, SO DO SOMETHING THAT YOU LOVE, SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT. NEVER LOSE SIGN OF YOUR "WHY". YOU SEE IF BUILDING A COMPANY IS JUST ABOUT THE MONEY, YOU CAN MAKE PLENTY OF MONEY WORKING FOR SOME BIG COMPANY. YOUR "WHY" HAS TO BE ABOUT MORE THAN JUST MONEY

A few years later, Jerry's company burned to the ground...and I mean to ashes, but he never gave up, and rebuilt the company, ultimately naming the rebirthed company Respire Respire

I feel so incredibly lucky to have known this man. He played an important role in molding who