

#1 BEST-SELLING BOOK OF THE YEAR  
—USA TODAY

# DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF... and it's all small stuff



SIMPLE WAYS TO KEEP THE  
LITTLE THINGS FROM TAKING  
OVER YOUR LIFE

---

**RICHARD CARLSON, PH.D.**

COAUTHOR OF HANDBOOK FOR THE SOUL

***Don't Sweat the Small Stuff ... and  
it's all small stuff***

***by Richard Carlson, PhD.***

# ***Synopsis:***

*Simple ways to keep little things from taking over your life*

*Hyperion Books*

*Copyright 1997*

*ISBN 0-7868-8185-2*

*I dedicate this book to my daughters, Jazzy and Kenna, who remind me every day how important it is to remember not to "sweat the small stuff." I love you both so much. Thank you for being just the way you are.*

# ***Acknowledgments***

*I would like to acknowledge the following people for assisting me in the creation of this book: Patti Breitman for her enthusiasm and encouragement surrounding this book and for her dedication and wisdom in not sweating the small stuff. And Leslie Wells for her vision and for her insightful editorial skill. Thank you both very much.*

# Contents

## Introduction

1. Don't Sweat the Small Stuff
2. Make Peace with Imperfection
3. Let Go of the Idea that Gentle, Relaxed People Can't be Superachievers
4. Be Aware of the Snowball Effect of Your Thinking
5. Develop Your Compassion
6. Remind Yourself that When You Die, Your "In Basket" Won't Be Empty
7. Don't Interrupt Others or Finish Their Sentences
8. Do Something Nice for Someone Else - and Don't Tell Anyone About It
9. Let Others Have the Glory
10. Learn to Live in the Present Moment
11. Imagine that Everyone Is Enlightened Except You
12. Let Others Be "Right" Most of the Time
13. Become More Patient
14. Create "Patience Practice Periods"
15. Be the First One to Act Loving or Reach Out
16. Ask Yourself the Question, "Will This Matter a Year from Now?"

17. [Surrender to the Fact that Life Isn't Fair](#)
18. [Allow Yourself to Be Bored](#)
19. [Lower Your Tolerance to Stress](#)
20. [Once a Week, Write a Heartfelt Letter](#)
21. [Imagine Yourself at Your Own Funeral](#)
22. [Repeat to Yourself, "Life Isn't an Emergency"](#)
23. [Experiment with Your Back Burner](#)
24. [Spend a Moment Every Day Thinking of Someone to Thank](#)
25. [Smile at Strangers, Look into Their Eyes, and Say Hello](#)
26. [Set Aside Quiet Time, Every Day](#)
27. [Imagine the People in Your Life as Tiny Infants and One-Hundred-Year-Old Adults](#)
28. [Seek First to Understand](#)
29. [Become a Better Listener](#)
30. [Choose Your Battles Wisely](#)
31. [Become Aware of Your Moods and Don't Allow Yourself to Be Fooled by the Low Ones](#)
32. [Life Is a Test. It Is Only a Test](#)
33. [Praise and Blame Are All the Same](#)
34. [Practice Random Acts of Kindness](#)
35. [Look Beyond Behavior](#)

36. [See the Innocence](#)
37. [Choose Being Kind over Being Right](#)
38. [Tell Three People \(Today\) How Much You Love Them](#)
39. [Practice Humility](#)
40. [When in Doubt about Whose Turn It Is to Take Out Trash, Go Ahead and Take It Out](#)
41. [Avoid Weatherproofing](#)
42. [Spend a Moment, Every Day, Thinking of Someone to Love](#)
43. [Become an Anthropologist](#)
44. [Understand Separate Realities](#)
45. [Develop Your Own Helping Rituals](#)
46. [Every Day, Tell at Least One Person Something You Li Admire, or Appreciate about Them](#)
47. [Argue for Your Limitations, and They're Yours](#)
48. [Remember that Everything Has God's Fingerprints on it](#)
49. [Resist the Urge to Criticize](#)
50. [Write Down Your Five Most Stubborn Positions and See if You Can Soften Them](#)
51. [Just for Fun, Agree with Criticism Directed Toward \(Then Watch It Go Away\)](#)
52. [Search for the Grain of Truth in Other Opinions](#)

53. See the Glass as Already Broken (and Everything Else Too)
54. Understand the Statement, "Wherever You Go, There you Are"
55. Breathe Before You Speak
56. Be Grateful when You're Feeling Good and Graceful when You're Feeling Bad
57. Become A Less Aggressive Driver
58. Relax
59. Adopt a Child Through the Mail
60. Turn Your Melodrama into a Mellow-Drama
61. Read Articles and Books with Entirely Different Points of View from Your Own and Try to Learn Something
62. Do One Thing at a Time
63. Count to Ten
64. Practice Being in the "Eye of the Storm"
65. Be Flexible with Changes in Your Plans
66. Think of What You Have Instead of What You Want
67. Practice Ignoring Your Negative Thoughts
68. Be Willing to Learn from Friends and Family
69. Be Happy Where You Are
70. Remember that You Become What You Practice Most
71. Quiet the Mind

72. [Take Up Yoga](#)
73. [Make Service an Integral Part of Your Life](#)
74. [Do a Favor and Don't Ask For, or Expect, One in Return](#)
75. [Think of Your Problems as Potential Teachers](#)
76. [Get Comfortable Not Knowing](#)
77. [Acknowledge the Totality of Your Being](#)
78. [Cut Yourself Some Slack](#)
79. [Stop Blaming Others](#)
80. [Become an Early Riser](#)
81. [When Trying to Be Helpful, Focus on Little Things](#)
82. [Remember, One Hundred Years from Now, All New People](#)
83. [Lighten Up](#)
84. [Nurture a Plant](#)
85. [Transform Your Relationship to Your Problems](#)
86. [The Next Time You Find Yourself in an Argument, Rather than Defend Your Position, See if You Can See the Other Point of View First](#)
87. [Redefine a "Meaningful Accomplishment"](#)
88. [Listen to Your Feelings \(They Are Trying to Tell you Something\)](#)
89. [If Someone Throws You the Ball, You Don't Have to Catch It](#)
90. [One More Passing Show](#)

91. *Fill Your Life with Love*
  92. *Realize the Power of Your Own Thoughts*
  93. *Give Up on the Idea that "More Is Better"*
  94. *Keep Asking Yourself, "What's Really Important?"*
  95. *Trust Your Intuitive Heart*
  96. *Be Open to "What Is"*
  97. *Mind Your Own Business*
  98. *Look for the Extraordinary in the Ordinary*
  99. *Schedule Time for Your Inner Work*
  100. *Live This Day as if It Were Your Last. It Might Suggested Reading*
- Suggested Reading*