

DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF-RICHARD CARLSON

This book abstract is intended to provide just a glimpse of this wonderful book with the hope that you may like to read the original book at leisure and enjoy its real beauty.

1. **Make Peace with Imperfection:** Accept it as natural in yourself, others and systems(govt etc). Elimination of the need for perfection allows you to discover perfection in life itself.
2. **Gentle, Relaxed People can be Super achievers:** Fear, stress drain enormous amount of energy. When you have inner peace, you are less distracted by wants, desires, needs, concerns. You focus on achieving goals.
3. **Be Aware of Snowball Effect of Thinking:** The more absorbed you are in the details of whatever is upsetting you, the worse you feel. Avoid mental rehearsal of things to be done. Detect and avoid snowball effect at the earliest.
4. **Develop Compassion :** Open heart to others. Donate money/time to cause you like. Beautiful smile and genuine hello to strangers. M. Teresa-We don't do great things on earth. We do small things with great love.
5. **Your 'In-basket' won't be empty when you die:** Accept that in reality, almost everything can wait. Rare things are in emergency category. Purpose of life is not to complete everything in the plan, but to enjoy each step of life's journey with love.
6. **Don't Interrupt Others or Finish Their Sentences:** It is a very destructive habit for the love and respect. Both become nervous, irritable and annoyed. It is exhausting as well. Causes resentment.
7. **Do Something for Others and Don't Tell Anyone About It:** Every act of kindness is wonderful. But not telling anyone ever about it is magical. Boasting smacks of ego and dilutes the +ve feeling.
8. **Let Others Have Glory:** Magical calm, and quiet inner confidence is your gain. Trying to gain attention is due to ego. It wants us to be seen, heard, respected, considered special.
9. **Learn To Live In The Present Moment :** Enjoy the present moment. You always have ONLY this moment for action, make the best of it.
10. **Imagine That Everyone Is Enlightened Except You:** Imagine that others in your life are trying to teach some important lesson indirectly. All good/bad things they do has a purpose in your spiritual evolution. Change attention from 'why they are doing this' to 'what is this teaching me'.
11. **Let Others Be Right Most of The Time :** Do you want be right or happy? You defend in trying to be right, which requires large amount of energy. Others also do the same. Action/Reaction. Causes mutual alienation and stress. Truth: We all hate to be corrected. Being listened to is one of the greatest desires of all human beings. Those who do that are more loved and respected. Those who habitually correct others are resented and avoided.
12. **Become More patient:** It is essential for inner peace. In bigger scheme of things, being late is small stuff. Practice seeing innocence of others even in potentially frustrating situations caused by them.
13. **Practice patience Periods :** Life itself is a classroom and patience is the curriculum. Start with determination to be patient for just 5 minutes(not when alone, when disturbances are more). It is a quality which feeds on itself. It provides perspective. Present challenge is not "life or death" situation, but a minor obstacle to be dealt with.

14. Be The First One To Reach Out: After some fight be the first one to make a move. It is good for all. It also brings peace.
15. Ask: Will this matter a Year From Now : Many a times small things irritate us too much. It is good to ask this question at such moments. It could be a mistake at home or office, a setback, a lost watch/wallet, sickness, arguments etc.
16. **Surrender to the Fact That Life Isn't fair: We all complain about this almost every day and lose of our peace of mind. Even if we don't understand why, there is a purpose in it. If we simply accept that this is how it is and will always be, then you are at peace.**
17. Allow Yourself To Be Bored: Our mind likes continuous excitement. However, our system is not designed for that. If we learn to welcome such breaks of doing nothing. We will be peaceful, relaxed and recharged, coming back stronger, shaper, more focussed and creative.
18. **Avoid Stress Build up: When you feel things are getting out of control, and you feel stressed up, take a few deep breaths, and go out for a short walk. If you can't go out of the office, at least get out of the place of action, and just take a coffee or washroom break. Just wash your face, or hum a tune if you can, or listen to some soothing music, or just relax in a chair as if you are taking a few minutes nap. When stress is small it is easy to manage and control. Once it gathers momentum, it is difficult to stop.**
19. Once a Week Write A heartfelt Letter: It need not be to a relation, friend, or a colleague. It can be to anyone who has +vely influenced you. Since the letter is not to be posted, you need not worry about the style. The expressed feelings are important. You will enjoy this habit. It is an expression of gratitude, and the more we do it, the more we benefit.
20. Imagine Yourself At Your Funeral: When you are on your deathbed, your life priorities look different. How you wish you should have lead a more happy life. More time for those who love you. More time for what you truly loved. This gives you timely reminders to correct your life style.
21. **Repeat To Yourself That Life Isn't An Emergency : Most of the time we are habitually creating emergency when there is none, and get stressed up. If we learn to relax we shall have more fun.**
22. **Experiment With A Backburner: Like the cooking backburner which is used for cooking slow and tasty meal, after fast heating on front burners, we should pass on some problems which can wait, to the subconscious mind. It will then seek best solutions in a relaxed way.**
23. **Spend Some Time Everyday To Thank Someone : Gratitude and peace go hand in hand. Do it as many times as you can. But at least 1st thing in the morning. This is an absolute must.**
24. **Smile at Strangers, Look into Their Eyes, and Say Hello: We generally have very little eye contact with strangers. Happy people are very warm towards strangers. Being the 1st one to smile at strangers, looking into their eyes and saying hello, makes others feel respected, and they will generally feel nice and grateful. This brings in a profound feeling of inner happiness.**
25. **Set Aside Quiet Time Every Day: There is something rejuvenating and peaceful about being alone and having some time to reflect, work, or simply enjoy the quiet. While coming back home, stop at a nice spot, spend a few minutes looking at nature, or simply close eyes and breathe slowly. It slows you down, and helps in feeling centred and grateful. Find what suits you best in a creative manner.**

26. Imagine People in Your Life As Tiny Infants and as 100 Year Old Adults: Even if these persons make mistakes and irritate you, if you think of them like this, you will become more peaceful.
27. Seek First to Understand: Makes you more content and effective. It essentially means without waiting for others to understand you, you take the 1st step in trying to understand others. It is not about right or wrong, it is about effective communication. The other person feels respected, and communication improves, resulting in loving relationships.
28. Become a Better Listener: Most of us are very poor listeners. We interrupt others and start responding. Be content to listen fully what others are saying. Other person then feels respected. Both feel peaceful, and conserve energy. There is no competition for time. The understanding and communication then becomes better.
29. Choose Your Battles Wisely: This simply means that there is no need to get worked up about everything. Do not argue, confront or fight over 'small stuff'. There will always be difference of opinion, imperfection. Accept these. This way you are more peaceful and conserve energy for the important battles.
- 30. Become Aware of Your Moods and Don't Allow Yourself To Be Fooled by The Low Ones: Our low moods can deceive us in believing that life is worse than what it really is. When you are in a good mood, life looks great. You have perspective, common sense and wisdom. Things don't appear so hard, problems appear less formidable and easier to resolve. Relationships are easy, communication is good. Bad mood does exactly the opposite. The important thing to realize is that with problems, people, remaining same, the moods make them appear different. When you detect yourself to be angry, frustrated, stressed, depressed, just accept that as a phase of low mood rather than blaming circumstances and people. Just relax and let it pass off. Don't analyze life at such moments, it will be emotional suicide. The trick is to be grateful for our good moods, graceful in our low moods. Remind yourself "This too shall pass". It will.**
- 31. Life Is a Test, Not a Battle: The challenges in life are not battles for survival, but just tests designed to see how we cope up and evolve. Accept things as they are, and do your best.**
32. Praise and Blame are All the Same: You will never be able to make everyone happy. Accept this fact of life gracefully. Good and bad will continue to happen.
33. Practice random Acts of Kindness: This very effective way to have joy of giving without expecting anything in return. Randomness makes sure that no one knows what you are doing. It brings great contentment.
34. Look Beyond Behaviour: We always practice this with children, old age people or patients. But if we can extend this to others as well, benefits could be enormous. Take precautions that other's acts don't harm you. But, think that they are behaving like this due to inability to cope up with challenges in their lives.
35. See The Innocence: We see persons as "guilty" rather than "innocent". If we get upset with other's behaviour, we need to change. Looking beyond behaviour makes you compassionate. Underneath even the most annoying behaviour is a frustrated person who is crying out for compassion. When you are not frustrated by others, you can better focus on the beauty of life.
36. Choose Being Kind Over Being Right: Our ego makes it a prestige issue of being right all the time. Being kind and understanding brings peace.

- 37. Tell Three People Today How Much You Love Them: Author Stephan Levine asks a question, "If you had only an hour to live and could make only one phone call-who would you call, what would you say, and why are you waiting?"**
38. Practice Humility: Humility =Peace. Proving yourself requires enormous energy, and robs you of peace.
39. When In Doubt about Whose Turn It Is to Take Out the trash, Go Ahead and take It Out: You do it because you feel good doing it. There is no competition in cutting corners.
40. Avoid Weatherproofing: In trying to have perfect relationship don't find fault with others.
- 41. Spend a Moment, Every Day, Thinking of Someone to Love: This attitude keeps resentment away. Our attention the gets redirected toward being the +ve, not only toward that person, but in general throughout the day. Every morning when I wake up, I close my eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then I ask myself the question, "Who shall i send love today?"**
42. Become an Anthropologist: This simply means "being interested, without judgement, in the way other people choose to live and behave." One of the cardinal rules of joyful living is that judging others takes a great deal of energy and, without exception, pulls you away from where you want to be.
43. Understand Separate Realities: Like vast differences in cultures of different countries, differences among individuals is also very vast. When we expect to see things differently, when we take it as given that others will do things differently and react differently to the same stimuli, the compassion we have for all increases dramatically. This again brings peace.
44. Develop Your Own Helping Rituals: Think of something that seems effortless yet helpful. It's fun, personally rewarding, and sets good example. Everybody wins.
- 45. Every Day, Tell At Least One Person Something You Like, Admire, or Appreciate about Them: Everyone enjoys being given genuine compliments. We also like the person who gives compliments. However, when it comes to giving others compliments, we many reasons not to do so. This is because of the negativity in us. If want to be happy, we must deliberately change this. Initially, it may be bit difficult, but once you see the beneficial effects to all, you will like doing it.**
46. Argue Your Limitations, and They are Yours: We often defend our limitations. The moment you do so, there can't be improvement in that respect.
47. Remember that Everything Has God's Fingerprints on It: It is easy to see this in good situations. But we can learn to find the holiness in seemingly ugly situations-difficult life situations, a family tragedy, or a struggle for life. If we do this a feeling of peace emerges.
48. Resist the Urge to Criticize: When we criticize another person, it says nothing about the other person; it merely says something about our need to be critical. It contributes to anger and distrust in the world and does not do any good. Like swearing, criticism is a bad habit. The solution is to catch yourself in the act of doing it.
49. Write Down Your Five Most Stubborn Positions and See if You Can Soften Them: Men are not good listeners. Women spend too much. People from other religion are bad. These are some examples of extreme, biased opinions.
50. Just For Fun, Agree with Criticism Directed Toward You(Then Watch it Go away): Most often, we are immobilized by criticism. We defend ourselves as if we are in a battle. This requires enormous amount of energy. We also lose our peace. By agreeing with criticism, we remain

peaceful, can see some genuine, and very useful feedback. The other person also feels happy that you take it sportingly and the adversary attitude changes to a friendly one.

51. Search for the Grain of truth in Other Opinions: If we develop this habit, everyone benefits, relations become healthy.
52. See the Glass as Already Broken: All things have life. Instead of becoming immobilized when something is broken, be grateful for the time you have had with the thing.
53. Wherever You Go, There You Are: Your tendencies go with you wherever you might go. Hence, change of place, partner, career, circumstances do not make you happy. Car is driven from inside, not outside. Become more peaceful where you are rather than thinking where you should be. With this habit, you carry peace wherever you go.
54. **Breathe Before You Speak: Simple but remarkable strategy which works for everyone. Almost immediate results include increased patience, added perspective, and as a side benefit, more gratitude and respect from others. Just pause-breathe—after other person has finished speaking. The time gap is just a fraction of a second. This gap does wonders to you.**
55. **Be Grateful when You are Feeling Good and Graceful when You are Feeling bad: The difference between a happy person and an unhappy person is not how often he gets low, or how low he drops, but instead, it's what he does with the low moods. When you observe peaceful, relaxed people, you will observe that they are grateful when feel good. They understand that both +ve and -ve feelings come and go. The acceptance "this too shall pass" is the key. The next time you are feeling bad, rather than fight it, just relax. Be graceful and calm.**
56. Relax: Not on vacation, or after retirement. It is a quality of heart that you access on a regular basis. Relaxed people can be super achievers, and very creative. It requires mind training with loving kindness and patience. It is a choice of how you respond to challenges in life.
57. Turn Your Melodrama into Mellow- Drama: Life isn't as bad as we make it out to be.
58. Read Books and Articles with Different Points of View: Mostly we tend to read or listen to things we like. However, we must try to read and understand other points of view.
59. Count to Ten : When you are getting angry, take a long, deep inhalation, and say no. One. Then relax your entire body and as you breathe out. Repeat the same process nine more times, saying each no. This clears your mind with a mini version of meditation. The combination of counting and breathing is so relaxing that it's almost impossible to remain angry once you are finished.
60. Practice Being In The Eye Of The Storm: Storm is violent and turbulent, but the eye of the storm is peaceful. We need to develop this quality by practicing with simpler events first like children birthday practice.
61. Be Flexible With Changes in Your Plans: Inflexibility creates enormous stress, and irritates others. Think what is important, plans or happiness of close persons.
62. Think of What You Have Instead of What You Want:
63. Practice Ignoring Your -ve Thoughts: We will always have both +ve and -ve thoughts, and much more of the latter. You can't avoid that. What is important is what we do with them. Ignoring them is far better strategy than analysing them. Giving attention is allowing them to hurt you. No one can hurt you without your consent.

