



Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

organized by **Raam Dev**

authored by **people who care**

created for **people who want to make a difference**

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Introduction

This ebook is a plea for help. It's a voice in a room full of people who care about exactly the same thing but who are entirely oblivious to each other. It's a calling for everyone living on Earth to recognize a new responsibility that we've brought upon ourselves, a responsibility that we created by quenching our thirst for abundance and feeding our lust for social and economic development.

In a world where technological advancement has given entire populations individual access to more knowledge than was available in the past thousand years *combined*, we have a new responsibility. We have a responsibility to speak up when something isn't right and take action when things need to change. We have a responsibility to be *responsible*.

The divide between those with the capacity to make a difference in the world and those who are stuck in survival mode has never been greater and if you're reading an electronic version of this ebook, there's a good chance you're a member of the former.

Everyone can do something to make a difference in the lives of those around them, even a homeless beggar who scrounges for money to feed his children. However, our capacity to make choices that affect the lives of others differs depending on our current social status in the world.

This ebook was based on the premise that everybody has a good heart. It was based on the premise that everybody *wants* to be part of a better world and that everybody *wants* to make a positive difference in the lives of those around them. The fact that this ebook even exists proves those statements to be true.

But *what* can we do? What changes can we make to our daily lives that will have a positive influence on the rest of the planet? This ebook exists to answer those questions. It's a place to start, a place to get ideas and inspiration for small ways that you can make a big difference.

How this Project was Born

In early 2010 I sold nearly all my possessions and left a decade-long career in the IT industry to pursue a childhood dream of traveling the world. I arrived in south India just one month shy of my 28th birthday with \$1500 to my name and one bag on my back.

The plan was to live in a foreign country for six months on a monthly budget of \$250 and to give myself time to discover who I was and what I wanted from life. I had no idea how profoundly the following four months would change my sense of purpose and direction.

Instead of discovering myself, I discovered an entire planet that needed my help. I met so many people who desperately needed someone who *cared*, someone who was willing to do whatever it took to help them. I met people who might die in a few days without my help, and yet I felt powerless.

Frustrated and overwhelmed, I began spending my days and nights contemplating what I could do to help. I laid awake at night in my \$4/night hotel room trying to come up with ideas for ways that I could make a difference in the lives of those who needed it the most.

But what could I do? I had nothing. My bank account was nearly empty and I had no special connections or friends in high places. I was just one person in a sea of billions.

Then one day while I was walking along a beach on the west coast of India, I stepped in small puddle of a sticky black fluid. I looked up and discovered the entire beach was littered with these small black dots, as far as the eye could see. Smelling the substance revealed what it was: oil.

I learned that it was a common practice for fishermen to illegally discharge engine oil from their boats. Every year the approaching monsoon weather would push the oil onto shore, killing marine life and turning the beaches into a wasteland. All this because a few individual fishermen made a bad choice.

That's when I realized how even though I may not have the wealth of Bill Gates or the political power of Barack Obama, my choices, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, rippled through time and affected everybody else on the planet. I realized that *just being me* was enough to start changing the world.

As Helen Keller wrote, "The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of tiny pushes of each honest worker." I realized that each of us is that honest worker and that all the small choices and decisions we make every day have a direct impact on the rest of the world.

But what was a *good* choice? What things could *I* do? If others asked me what *they* could do, what would I tell them? I realized that I needed to create something to answer those questions, something I could point them to where they could get ideas.

About the Content

I based the idea for this ebook around the premise that everyone is generally good, that everyone *wants* to be part of a better world, and that everyone *wants* to make a difference in the lives of those around them.

With this in mind, I sent an email out to a handful of fellow bloggers telling them about my idea for this project. I asked them to contribute a few words about things they were currently doing in their own lives that they felt were helping make a difference. I also asked them to forward my request on to anyone else who they thought was making a difference.

In less 3 weeks, over 40 bloggers responded with more than 100 ideas for ways to make a difference. Although many of the submissions were nearly identical, I wanted to reflect their collective wisdom and I chose not to filter out duplicates. Multiple submissions for the same idea meant the idea was especially important and that it was likely to make the biggest difference.

The content for this project doesn't end with this ebook. In fact, this ebook is just kindling for a bigger fire. Everyone has ideas. Everyone does little things throughout their day that they feel make a difference. We need to start sharing those ideas and empowering each other.

We need to make commitments to each other that we will make better choices. We need to hold each other accountable to ensure that we follow through with those commitments.

We need to make ourselves heard and let everyone around us know that *we care*. We need to set an example and be a leader so that we can open the door for others to express how they care and how they're making a difference.

Be the person that you would want to be around. Set an example for positivity. Exude happiness. Share ideas. Talk about issues that need changing and immediately follow up those conversations with short brainstorming sessions for solutions to those problems.

If you're on Facebook, come [join the Facebook group](#) for this ebook and post a message explaining how you're make a difference everyday day. If you have a blog, write a blog post that lists all the small ways that you bring positivity, joy, inspiration, and love into the lives of those around you.

If this ebook project does one thing, I want it to ignite a fire of hope. I want it to inspire people to start taking action. I want it to get people talking about what they can do *today* to make the world a better place for our children.

Charity sees the need, not the cause.

~German Proverb

In Case We Haven't Met (a Quick Introduction)

You can [read my full story here](#), but the short version is that I've been home schooled my entire life. I was raised a strict vegetarian with no television or furniture in the house and I grew up in a very unconventional American family that can best be described as a combination of Buddhism and Hinduism. Daily meditation, yoga, and Sanskrit mantras envelop my childhood memories.

My full first name is Raamashudhamappapavidham, but for obvious reasons I choose to use the shorter version of Raam. (When I applied for my drivers license, the full name from my birth certificate wouldn't fit in the computer and I was asked to provide something shorter!)

My full name is of Indian origin and although it has many different meanings it roughly translates to "the one who eliminates problems and leads others down the right path". I've always tried to be a helpful person, but I've also always felt this nagging feeling inside that I wasn't doing enough.

Traveling outside the United States for the first time and spending several months experiencing firsthand the poverty and suffering in India, I now feel a stronger sense of purpose and direction than ever before -- a stronger sense of clarity. For the first time, I can see exactly what I want to do with the rest of my life.

Home schooling allowed me the freedom to follow my passions, but my love for both nature and technology had always been a source of conflict in my life. I was never able to find a good balance between the real world and the virtual world.

The recent decision to end my decade-long career in the IT industry and become a world traveling nomad was at the root of that frustration. However, I now see that I can use my love for technology to empower others and work towards helping make a positive difference in the lives of millions.

By connecting real world needs to the incredible resources provided by technology, we can develop a synergy between the two that assists in the development of a more harmonious future.

I believe that we can all be part of this future by living and working purposefully, by making educated decisions, and by directing our energy where it's needed most. I believe we can do it through empowering ourselves with the great abundance of knowledge and technology that is available to us today.

We can bridge the gap in communication and unite the entire human race under a common goal. We can work towards a world where abundance is sustainable and where inequality and poverty have no home.

This ebook is my first contribution, my first step on what I foresee as a lifelong journey -- a journey that I will share with you on my website and use your feedback to help guide me.

I invite you to offer your advice, your thoughts, and your support. If we haven't already connected, I'd love for you to join me and become part of a growing [community of passionate changemakers](#); a community that has already started a global movement that is well underway.

It's a movement to empower ourselves to be all that it means to be human. It's a movement to declare our independence from pain, suffering, and injustice wherever it may exist.

You become part of this movement when you make the decision to live your life to its fullest potential. You become part of this movement when you decide to use a piece of your human existence to do something for the good of all humanity.

You Are Already Making a Difference

Compassion. Kindness. Friendliness. Joy. Love. Curiosity. Honesty. Respect. Generosity. Thoughtfulness. These are all vital qualities for a truly harmonious society; a world without inequality; a world where progress and social development advance in a way that is beneficial to all; a world where all abundance is sustainable; a world of sustainable abundance.

The way we interact with others and the choices that we make every day are changing the world right now. Whether those changes are positive or negative is entirely up to us.

We need to remember that an entire world exists out there beyond our own small problems. The world needs us to be responsible; to think about the greater good; to think long-term; to think about how our actions will affect the lives of other human beings thousands of miles away.

This Earth is *our* home and we are all *equally* responsible.

Do it for the young mother I met in south India who couldn't feed her child and wandered the streets in tattered clothes begging for help. If she was living in your home, would you help her?

Do it for the children I met in Bombay who wake up hungry every morning on the sidewalk and spend their entire day tugging on the pants of strangers, putting their hands to their mouths and asking for food to feed themselves.

There are literally *millions* of human beings living like that all over the globe who need you to take a moment from your busy life and make a choice that helps them.

You don't *need* to leave your home. You don't *need* to quit your job. You don't *need* to travel the world. You don't *need* to have lots of money.

This ebook proves it. This ebook provides you ways to start making a difference right now. Ways that you can start making small adjustments to your life that will reverberate through time and positively affect the rest of the world.

There are practical everyday actions in this ebook that affect our environment, more personal choices that affect our health, and even choices that we can make to indirectly influence those around us.

Energy does not die, it only changes form. Any positive energy you emit -- be it through your actions, choices, thoughts, words, or emotions -- extends through time and changes the world around you.

Many ideas have altered the course of history. It's my hope that the idea that you, as an individual, have the incredible power to influence the future of the planet through your individual actions, will also alter history and end poverty and suffering as we know it today.

An individual has not started living until he can rise
above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns
to the broader concerns of all humanity.

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

We can do no great things, only small things with great love.

~Mother Teresa

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Change yourself first

As much as you may think you know where the blame lies for the "world's problems", you have no way to know all facts and all the information. Stay away from blame, from anger, from pointless demonstrations and empty platitudes that are created by others and only sound good on the surface.

Instead, work on setting a good example as a good human being, a stand-up citizen, a world-class person whom others want to model and learn from. Make an effort to contribute rather than to criticize. Make a decision to inform and educate rather than blame and fume over. Choose not to judge by assuming all persons belonging to a group are "bad" because one or two bad examples arise. Choose to look at each person and not at their ethnicity, background, culture or nation first.

Make the choice to believe that almost everyone in this world has a good intention and yet having said that, be vigilant because evil forces do exist (crime, terrorism) and we must work hard to stop them from poisoning the well of human compassion and goodness.

Farnoosh Brock of [Prolific Living](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Vote with your money

I want to introduce you to the wall. The wall holds up a raging dam of human potential. It's held together with money – the money the same people spend. Change how you spend money and the wall collapses, and the world changes. Drastically. Forever.

If you think that soda is bad for people (which it sure as hell is), never, ever, ever, buy soda. That's a vote in the ballot box. Same goes for meat, alcohol and other plagues on humanity.

Want more organic food? Bite the bullet and buy organic. That's a vote for the organic industry and more power to them.

Every dollar in your pocket is a vote. Don't forget it. Every single one is counted. It's a failsafe system. It's perfect democracy.

[Ali Dark](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Practice your "enough"

Look closely at everything around you and see how much you already have. Little by little, learn to notice when adding more of something is not making you any happier (you need much less than you'd think). Then say "enough" to food, new gadgets, more entertainment, work projects. It's amazing how much more you will enjoy all of them when you consume them in moderation.

[Jarkko Laine](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

If you have much, give of your wealth;
if you have little, give of your heart.

~Arabian Proverb

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Hold the door

Imagine waking up in the morning on the wrong side of the bed. You drive to the store and as you are about to enter, someone closes the door right in your face. How does that feel? It's not an obligation or a requirement to open doors for others, but doing so shows the other person that you acknowledge their existence and are willing to do a small favor for them. But you never know. This simple act of kindness could totally turn their day around.

Hulbert Lee of [From Bottom Up](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Love

Love will only come from a mind that is new, young, fresh. A mind that allows your heart to feel and does not seek to divide and compare itself with the world. Division only breeds conflict. It's the source of all our problems.

[Ivan Campuzano](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Avoid plastic

Stop buying foods and beverages in plastic bottles and stop using plastic bags. 2.5 million plastic bottles are thrown away every hour in the U.S. alone. Over 1 million plastic bags are consumed each minute worldwide. Refuse or reuse because plastic is a petroleum based product, plastic trash in the ocean endangers the life of sea birds and mammals, and plastic is toxic to your health. [Statistics from plastiki.com]

Sandra Lee of [Always Well Within](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Reusables, no disposables

One reusable water bottle and coffee mug. Five reusable grocery bags. Five kitchen towels. Using all of these over time saves thousands of pounds of plastic, paper, and virgin wood. Not to mention reduction in landfill size. The exponential reduction in number and popularity of disposable products, the knowledge that less crap is getting whirled into the Pacific trash heap, that less marine life will die from eating my plastic trash, or that less virgin wood will be consumed for my convenience, is worth that one extra thing to remember when leaving the house.

Lynn Fang of [Upcycled Love](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

It seems to me that any full grown, mature adult would have a desire to be responsible, to help where he can in a world that needs so very much, that threatens us so very much.

~Norman Lear

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Emit positive vibrations

I believe that each of us emits a vibration that can either positively or negatively affect others. When I was a meditation instructor one of the things that was stressed was that one really clear, centered, calm person could uplift the vibration of others just by being around them. I believe this to be true. One of the goals of meditating was not only to help yourself, but then to become a sort of beacon radiating goodness for others. If our vibration unknowingly uplifts others out of their darker or negative moods, are we not helping the world? If each of us were aware of this, would we see just how connected we all are?

Angela Artemis of [Powered by Intuition](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Challenge yourself to not spend any money

Start with one day where you don't spend any money to see what it's like for many people in the world who have to make do with what they already have, or have to do without.

Hungry? Instead of going to the corner store, open your cupboards and fridge to see what you already have to eat that day. Make supper for your family with the ingredients you have or enlist a neighbor and have a potluck between families. Be creative and try different combinations.

Leave your car at home if it needs gas so that you don't spend money. Call up a co-worker for a ride to work or better yet, walk if it's within a few miles. Tell your children No, they can't have a toy or treat today and teach them to delay instant gratification.

Bring your own coffee and lunch to work and don't spend any money during your 3:00 snack break.

Leave your wallet at home for one day. See if it makes a difference in your mindset and learn to be self-reliant.

Extend your one day challenge to two days and then so on to see how long you can live without spending any money. Barter with others, use what you have, or do without. It can make a difference. With the money you save, why not give it to someone who is even worse off than you?

Karen Ruby of [A Meaningful Existence](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Lend to entrepreneurs in poor countries

Websites like [Kiva](#) allow you to lend entrepreneurs in much poorer countries small amounts of money which they can use to develop their businesses. Loans start at just \$25 and with a repayment rate of over 98% you are very likely to get repaid. A way to help fellow entrepreneurs in developing countries at little or no-cost to yourself, there is no excuse for anyone not to sign up!

[Danny Cooper](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Write things that help people

I don't post to my blog every day, but every day I'm writing something. My primary motivation is to help others live a better life. My subjects may range from exploring the world, to reducing debt, to finding your dream job, but my goal is always the same.

Jennifer Barry of [LiveRichly](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of tiny pushes of each honest worker.

~Helen Keller

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Free yourself from location

When you make the changes necessary to becoming location independent, you suddenly have the tools to go anywhere in the world where change is necessary. You can't do that if you're stuck in one place. Part of going location independent is getting rid of all your stuff, the side-effect of this is you have more time and money to make change.

Everett Bogue of [Far Beyond The Stars](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Take action

Even five minutes a day adds up to a lot of progress over the course of a year. If it is worth doing, do it every day. Sometimes it is hard to get started on projects that seem too huge and insurmountable. Just make a commitment to five minutes a day, EVERYDAY. Five minutes of language learning, blog writing, exercise or whatever is important to you. You will likely find that once you get started you will lose track of time and accomplish much more than you thought.

John Bardos of [JetSetCitizen](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Use a home water filtration system

If you live in an area where tap water isn't safe to drink; buy a home water filter, as plastic bottles are detrimental to the environment and can sometimes leech chemicals into the drinking water contained within them.

Henri Junttila of [Wake Up Cloud](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be sustainable

Because so many of the world's problems are related to the incredible over-use of resources by Western countries and the lack of resources in 3rd world countries, I believe that practicing sustainability is an important way for me to make a positive difference.

At my house, this means that I use natural, biodegradable cleaners, we make an effort not to waste water, we rarely if ever eat meat, and we grow a lot of fruit and vegetables. Our garden provides lettuce, kale, tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, peppers, herbs, lemons, nectarines, raspberries, and strawberries. Growing our own produce helps the environment since we grow organically and we buy less at the store, thereby participating less in the energy-inefficient business of food in the U.S.

Jenna Francisco of [This is My Happiness](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness,
to pull another hand into the light.

~Norman B. Rice

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Become a friend

Many people live in this big world feeling quite alone. Sometimes age, disability, illness or life circumstances have led them to a place where they have no one left. It's easy to give a little of your time to someone once a week. Find them through a local organization like my hometown's [Citizen Advocacy](#) or visit a seniors' residence, detention centre, homeless shelter or simply reach out to someone in your neighborhood who lives alone. You might make huge difference in that person's life.

Katie Tallo of [Momentum Gathering](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat vegetarian once per week

Meat production creates unnecessary pollution, greenhouse gases and waste. But most people don't want to give up meat forever, so instead why not have one day per week without meat. The environment will thank you and your waistline might too.

[Scott Young](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

One thing, right now

The best thing you can do for any good cause is to take one step, right now. One donation. One volunteer hour. One expression of support. One act of participation.

Don't fall into the trap of waiting for the perfect opportunity. Figure out one simple way you can contribute right now. Do that first.

Jeffrey Tang of [The Art of Great Things](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Develop a relationship with the stars

One of the most important things I think we can do as human beings is to remember that we are floating through space on a planet in orbit about a blazing star, which itself is in orbit about an incredible galaxy among billions of galaxies. This puts the ego in its place real quick, because you realize just how insignificant your worries and concerns really are from this cosmic perspective while simultaneously realizing exactly how precious and perfect life actually is.

One of the best ways to gain this sense of cosmic detachment from life's strains is to continually develop a relationship with the living, moving, breathing, changing sky. In ancient times, they didn't have movie theaters or televisions, they had their imaginations and the heavens, and what epic myths they created! By watching the sky you are continually filled with a sense of awe and adventure. No matter what time you go out and look, there is always something grand going on in space. Certain moments are more dramatic, such as sunrise and sunset, but getting to know the planets and their cycles is life-changing.

As an astrologer, I do a daily meditation and visualize where all the planets are and I keep this in my consciousness throughout the day. But even if you are not an astrologer, and you don't care where Jupiter or Saturn is in the Zodiac, it's life-enhancing just to know where they are in the sky, or to gaze upon them through a telescope or iPad app and watch their moons, and realize that there are entire worlds of consciousness happening out there independent of our concerns and egoic focus.

Life is beaming through the galaxies! That realization alone opens us to a spirituality that is universal in scope and full of reverence for the life we live and our existence against the grand backdrop of the drama of creations creating creation.

Kelly Lee Phipps of [TravelingMagi](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Every action in our lives touches on
some chord that will vibrate in eternity.

~Edwin Hubbel Chapin

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Smile

When you approach someone you don't know or if you are going into a new environment, put a smile on your face. I'm not talking about having a silly permanent grin on your face at all times, but it's amazing how people will respond to you if you approach them with a smile and positive body language. This opens the door for engagement, conversations and opportunities to learn on both sides.

Audrey Scott of [UncorneredMarket](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Ask why

Learn to understand your own motivations. What do you want? What makes you happy? What can you offer the world?

Chris Guillebeau of [The Art of Non-Conformity](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Make little choices

Every little thing you do has an impact--and your small actions add up to big effects. It's also easier to change the smaller things in your life than the big ones. Be conscious of the small actions, the little bits of trash, the brief conversations... if you make good choices on a small level, it will improve your whole sphere of existence.

Jessica Reader of [Love and Trash](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Let nature dry your clothes

Drying machines use a lot of energy, which make them hard on the environment and hard on your wallet. Hang drying clothes is better for the environment, better for your clothes, and saves you money! Clothes will actually last longer when air-dried and you don't run the risk of them shrinking. Win-Win-Win. The sun is also a pro at taking wrinkles out.

Matt Bailey of [A World of Inspiration](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Improve one thing

In my quest to leave the world just a little bit better than I found it, I have followed a very simple philosophy. I try to leave every room or place I enter just a little bit better when I leave. Clear up a bit here, fold something there, straighten a picture here. The same goes for people, make them feel at least just a little bit better when they leave you than when they met you.

Jonny Gibaud of [The Life Thing](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Use appliances' "eco" settings

We use our washing machine and dishwasher on their cooler, "eco" settings, rather than the standard ones. It doesn't take any longer, and everything comes out just as clean! We're not only saving the environment, we're saving ourselves a bit of money on energy bills.

Ali Hale of [Aliventures](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Practice equanimity

This one skill helps us to avoid reacting in a rash and potentially harmful manner to the frustrating situations we meet in life. And the more calmly we can react, the more beneficial our words and actions will be to the world.

Earl Baron of [WanderingEarl](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Pare down your stuff

Storing a house full of "stuff" is of no real benefit to anyone. Ours is being pared down from things we never even see or use to what we really need. We don't buy many unnecessary things just for the sake of shopping or consuming.

James Schipper of [Live Collar Free](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.

~William James

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat local

This may sound obvious, but when you consciously choose to eat at street food stands or small family-run restaurants you are directly benefiting the people serving you food. This means that when you are traveling or eating out when at home, your money goes towards people (and their families) instead of big companies (i.e., chain restaurants). The same goes for shopping at fresh markets or buying food in small corner stores.

Audrey Scott of [UncorneredMarket](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat less meat

Many cultures around the world don't consume nearly as much meat as America. You can get the necessary protein from much more sustainable and environmentally-friendly methods. You don't have to cut out all the meat in your diet (I haven't) but just be aware that you're probably consuming more than you actually need.

Adam Groffman of [Travels of Adam](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Repair and reuse

Repair and reuse things instead of trashing them. We should buy things of better quality and fix, repurpose, or recycle them as much as possible. Tossing and buying replacements is not a sustainable method the way it is commonly done today. Use and don't waste.

James Schipper of [Live Collar Free](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Give without expectations

Give with no expectations of receiving anything in return. This encourages others to exercise their compassion and appreciation for you (and other people, in general), instead of mindlessly interacting with you based on a set price. It also encourages you to engage in heartfelt activities, ensuring that you are giving your best (and thus, increasing the likelihood that others will be satisfied with your work, which, in turn, expands your good reputation and your abundance in the long-term). Be a gracious receiver, too, so that others may benefit from the good feeling they get when they give to you!

[Peter B. Roth](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

The race advances only by the extra achievements of the individual.
You are the individual.

~Charles Towne

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Conserve water

We are losing it. Every year clean usable water becomes more and more scarce. The least we can do is tighten our taps. Turn off the water when you're not using it -- even saving five seconds of a running faucet helps. Every time you hear something dripping, remember that the planet is running out of usable water and go do something about it!

Zaheer Abbas of [UdaipurTimes](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Buy or grow local & organic food

The way food is produced and consumed in affluent societies is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing our world. One step that we can take to confront this challenge at the personal level is to buy local and organic food. A little research may uncover a local organization that is already set up to provide this service. Wherever possible, grow your own food.

Samuel Alexander of [Simplicity Collective](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be open to global products

Don't get stuck on only buying products from your home country, think globally. Remember that many poor people from poor countries depend on the manufacturing and exports. By buying their products, you help support them.

Ryan and Dina of [Vagabond Quest](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Bridge the gap

Smile, even to a stranger, because it is the best facial expression that can bridge the gap of hostility, hatred and discrimination. The world today is badly in need of a smile. So smile :)

Zaheer Abbas of [UdaipurTimes](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but
no one thinks of changing himself.

~Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be minimal

When you own less, you have more time, energy and money to spend on experiences and memories. Most 'stuff' that you'll own in your lifetime will have only been purchased because you've been convinced that owning it would make your life better, when in reality the investment turns out to be more of a roadblock than anything. There's nothing wrong with owning nice things, just be sure that what you own is absolutely necessary and that you own very little of what is not.

Colin Wright of [ExileLifestyle](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Learn new vocabulary

Every time I hear a new or interesting word, I try to write it down. Talking with people from different countries, backgrounds or beliefs, you're constantly exposed to new vocabulary. Keep those words—whether as a memory or as a way to teach others. Words have power.

Adam Groffman of [Travels of Adam](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Contemplate criticism

Positive thinking has its limits. If everyone says you're great, and you say everyone else is great, chances are things are not that great. Ignore people who are only trying to bring you down, but many critics offer useful perspectives that will compel you to do better work and think carefully about your beliefs.

David Turnbull

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Switch your light bulbs

If you're not already using energy-efficient lightbulbs, then it's time to switch them all. Prices have fallen radically -- you may be able to get them for just pennies. Each bulb will last around ten years, saving you on replacement bulbs and on electricity (and doing the planet a huge favor at the same time).

Ali Hale of [Aliventures](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Go the extra mile. It's never crowded.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Don't quit

Every time you start something, you're re-aligning energies around yourself. If you cut loose from what you started, those energies will be lost too, wandering around, ready to be used by someone else. And that someone else may not always be the best person to handle those energies. Yes, it may require herculean efforts from yourself, but that's exactly what will make the outcome remarkable.

[Dragos Roua](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be mindful

This is probably the most important habit a person can develop. It's one of those meta-habits that seems to affect all the habits related to it. While I'm by no means perfect at being mindful 100% of the time, I try to be increasingly more mindful each day.

Jonathan Mead of [IlluminatedMind](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Work on what's important

Accomplish the top priority for your day... first. Nothing gets you moving towards a noble goal than by taking care of the most important business before anything else. So start with job 1, whatever that is for you.

Steve Haase of [ThoughtLead](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Invest your time wisely

The more successful you become, the more work you will accumulate and the more people will want your time. The unfortunate reality is that you have to tune out a lot of the "noise" and only invest your time in the few projects that really matter to you, the few things you are truly passionate about. Don't let other people or projects you don't care about eat up your time. Sometimes, like Hugh MacLeod says, you have to Ignore Everybody in order to invest the required time and energy into what you're best at. Finishing the projects YOU care about will make a bigger difference on more people's lives than the few emails you didn't respond to.

Cody McKibben of [ThrillingHeroics](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.

~John Wooden

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Take the first step

You never know what happens next, so just do something. You have a dream. But here's the deal: if you keep just thinking about your ways to make a difference, nothing will ever change. You will never know what tomorrow brings, so don't plan too much. Just decide on an initial plan (knowing that it will change along the way) and take the first step: write your first blog post, draft the first page of your comic book, buy your plane ticket to Nepal. And remember that even the smallest things can make a big difference in another person's life!

[Jarkko Laine](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Open your heart

Meditate on your heart chakra opening. Feel how much love you have to give to the world. In meditation send prayers and healing energy to all the people on our entire planet. Focus on seeing planet Earth in your mind's eye. See yourself cradling the Earth in your hands and feeling how much love you have for our home and all its inhabitants. Know that your love is helping to heal this planet.

Angela Artemis of [Powered by Intuition](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Meditate

This is the art of learning how to watch your mind, seeing the content of your consciousness without trying to control, distort or suppress what you see. This will allow you to see that yes indeed I am the world, I am part of all that is beautiful and all that is ugly. In learning to watch your mind you will come to see how it is possible to change yourself.

[Ivan Campuzano](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Consciously recognize interdependency

Everything I need for a comfortable life, someone made. A small organic farmer grew my food. A factory worker made my clothes, my kitchenware, my computer, my glasses, my medicines. A researcher is working on the next new treatment for a disease I might contract. Construction workers created and built our environment with love, sweat, and the breath of human life and labor.

By consciously recognizing what it takes for someone to make me these things, I appreciate everything I own and use so much more. When we think we've succeeded with only our own hard work, we forget all the other helping hands along the way that helped feed, clean, clothe, teach, support, inspire, and guide us towards our dreams.

To remind myself of all the greatness in my life, at some point every day, I consciously recognize interdependency. To the construction worker passing by, I silently step into his shoes for a brief moment, and thank him for his gift of shelter. For in the end, our human community, with its diverse interests and talents, is our safety net.

Lynn Fang of [Upcycled Love](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

A good example has twice the value of good advice.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Do your laundry in a bucket

It's been over 2 years since I've operated a washing machine or dryer. The biggest hindrance to washing your own clothes in a bucket is to let a huge amount of dirty clothes pile up. This looks intimidating and simply not fun to have to wash. Instead, wash a few things in a small bucket every other day or so. It only takes a few minutes and then your clothes can air dry overnight. After two years my clothes still smell fresh and I've saved money, all kinds of energy, and some water too!

Mark Wiens of [Migrationology](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Go vegan

How do you get out of danger? What do you do when you're lost? If you're standing at the cliff's edge do you walk sideways? No. You backtrack. You go back where you started.

There's a good reason – better safe than sorry. And the vegan diet is *saaafe*. Start however you can – but aim for total plant-based eating.

Global meat production has doubled since the '60s and unchecked, it could double again in the next 40 years. We've converted massive amounts of prime forest to grassland or wasteland (so much so that we can't remember how much forest there used to be, as is the case in my home Australia). We've used or polluted much of our fresh water. We've killed billions upon billions of animals. For what result? Drastically increased chronic disease. Climate change (remember the trees being gone? That's a hint to the cause).

We don't need meat, milk, fish or cheese. Don't take my word for it. Take my life for it. If you try, you'll get it.

[Ali Dark](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Quiet your mind

Take time each day to sit quietly and allow your mind to settle. Any form of regularly practiced meditation naturally calms the mind, diffuses turbulent emotions like anxiety, anger and aggression, improves health, softens your heart, brings inner peace, and stimulates greater happiness—all of which contribute to a better world. Simply place your attention on your breath, breathe slowly, and gently return your mind to the breath whenever it wanders off.

Sandra Lee of [Always Well Within](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Focus on the present moment

Follow the wisdom of your heart and trust the process that unfolds (even if it makes no "rational" sense). We all have an important part to play in the well-being of our world (We would not be here, otherwise)! The heart is aware of the details of one's part because it is the seat of wisdom for each person and it is each person's connection to all that is. Know that you will be supported when you embrace your heart's wisdom and follow its lead.

[Peter B. Roth](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

When you dig another out of their troubles,
you find a place to bury your own.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Let elderly people have your seat

I know this may not be typical in Western culture, but next time you see a person enter the bus that's a lot older than you, be bold and let them have your seat. Yes, you may have to stand for a while, but it's better than making an elderly person stand. It will make them feel great that younger people still respect and care for older people.

Hulbert Lee of [From Bottom Up](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Live consciously

That means eat consciously (clean, vegan or vegetarian, natural foods and do recycle please), speak consciously (clean language, pure and correct use of language, no profanity, eloquent and sincere), and behave consciously (control your moods, show your best attitude and work hard to make this a habit, respect your elders, be kind to children, and be careful whom you judge or gossip about, choose to love more and judge less, give more and expect less in return).

Farnoosh Brock of [Prolific Living](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Live car-free

Cars are hugely expensive, and not just in the monetary sense. Cars also cost you your health and cost the environment. I strongly believe if you are not travelling more than ten miles on a regular basis then you have no need for a car. There are many superior alternatives such as: walking, running, cycling, trains and buses. Each with massive benefits over driving a car.

[Danny Cooper](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat more vegetarian food

This has long been a controversial issue, and while I have yet to decide on strictly moral reasons for choosing vegetarianism, I believe the arguments in favor of environmentalism and personal health are compelling enough to make the switch.

Most meat, especially in America, is produced in factory farms, which require huge amounts of antibiotics, hormones, water, and animal feed. The waste output is enormous and egregiously toxic. No matter your principles on eating meat, the reality is that factory farms are unsustainable and do tremendous harm to the earth. Vegetarianism uses less resources, produces less toxic waste, and is much kinder to animals and local ecosystems. If you do eat meat, support pasture-raised beef and chicken, and sustainably caught or farmed seafood.

Lynn Fang of [Upcycled Love](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.

~Mother Teresa

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be a leader

Change starts with yourself, only you can make a difference in your own behavior. People need leaders to show them that change is possible. So, if you're pissed about the Gulf oil spill, you can't make a difference if you're still driving. If you want the world to be a happier place, you have to start smiling.

Everett Bogue of [Far Beyond The Stars](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Stop consuming

Buying things can make our lives easier but there is a point when your possessions own you. How much time do you spend thinking about things? We shop for things, maintain our things, clean our things, protect our things, store our things and worry about our things. You are what you do, NOT what you buy.

John Bardos of [JetSetCitizen](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat unpackaged foods

You and I both know how unhealthy most packaged foods are. On top of that, they require a lot of materials to produce, which in turn are damaging to the environment, and to you.

Henri Junttila of [Wake Up Cloud](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Create a garden

Growing a flower garden is a fun way to bring beauty to the neighborhood. I have flowers on all four sides of my little house on the corner, and they can be seen from a block away in any direction. It's not a fancy garden, just a ragtag collection of perennials, and a shrub I've patiently trimmed into a giant bunny rabbit. It makes the little kids laugh.

Meg Wolfe of [Minimalist Women](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

The purpose of life is not to be happy - but to *matter*, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you have lived at all.

~Leo Rosten

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Share with a child

Share your deepest fears, your most heart-felt desires, your strongest opinions and your inner truths with a child. Many of us hide who we really are from children, but they can learn so much about honesty, hope and love if we show them our humanity. And, they might just pass it on.

Katie Tallo of [Momentum Gathering](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Connect your life with a greater mission

Because most of us find fulfillment in being part of something bigger than just our own concerns.

Chris Guillebeau of [The Art of Non-Conformity](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Travel

Don't wait for friends to go with you. Traveling is my favorite thing to do and I held myself back for a long time by waiting for friends to come with me. I had wanted to visit Australia since I was 18 but was always waiting for that "perfect" moment; when the time was right and when some good friends would come with me.

That time never came. Friends always had excuses from not being able to take time off work to not having enough money. Finally when I turned 24, I decided to stop waiting and go by myself. My cousin actually joined me for the first month and then I continued on for 5 months alone. I really miss not taking the opportunity earlier as my outlook on life would have been totally different, as it is now.

Traveling alone is incredible. Even though it can sometimes feel lonely, there are plenty of friends to be made all over the world. Being alone also lets you do whatever you want, whenever you want!

Don't plan your trip too much. I am very good at not planning. My cousin hated it because lot's of time was spent in Internet cafes booking bus travel and hostels. However, once I was alone and had many months of travel ahead of me, it helped not to have plans. Planning a little is good but planning too much will hold you back from opportunities. I met lots of people along the way who asked if I wanted to hop in their truck with them and travel the coast for 3 weeks. I had no plans and so I agreed. One of the best decisions I made!

Matt Bailey of [A World of Inspiration](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Remember to take time off

It's important to treat yourself well—your health, your energy levels, and the amount of sleep, relaxation, and fun you get are important. Have a nice long dinner with friends at least once a week, spend time with your family, protect your weekends if they're important to you, and travel if you want. These things are of the utmost importance. You have to invest in yourself before you can invest properly in others.

Cody McKibben of [ThrillingHeroics](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Instead of counting your days, make your days count.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Work hard

Whether for yourself or for others. The world needs more people that are genuine hard workers, who don't cut corners and who do the very best job they can in every task they take on. Life is too short for substandard work - aim for excellence.

Jonny Gibaud of [The Life Thing](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Don't be afraid of selfishness

Far from having a 'me, me, me' kind of attitude, it is important that we make decisions in our lives that bring us as much happiness as possible. After all, a happy person is going to be far more effective in bringing about positive change in this world than an unhappy one.

Earl Baron of [WanderingEarl](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Buy recycled toilet paper

We all flush paper away every day -- and this is, understandably, not good for the planet. Make a point of buying recycled toilet paper: you don't need the luxury quilted stuff. (And if recycled paper sounds like too much effort, remember that the Romans used a lump of moss on a stick...)

Ali Hale of [Aliventures](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Respect your enemies

Most people want to do what's right, even if their beliefs contradict yours. It does you no good to get angry and hateful just because you believe someone to be flat-out wrong. Learn to respect their good intentions, if only because it frees you to concentrate on doing great work.

Jeffrey Tang of [The Art of Great Things](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

It's easy to make a buck. It's a lot tougher to make a difference.

~Tom Brokaw

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Participate in micro-financing

Get involved and support entrepreneurs around the world for as little as a \$25 loan. It doesn't take a lot of money to support a small entrepreneur in another country. [Kiva.org](https://kiva.org) makes it easy to find individuals and groups in other countries who are in need of small amounts of capital to start or develop a business. And, this is a loan, meaning that if you decide you need the money at the end of the loan period, you can get it returned to you (repayment rates are in the high 90th percentile). The entry point to get involved with micro-finance and provide credit to someone around the world who needs starts at \$25.

If you're curious about micro-financing, here's an FAQ to [read what it's all about](#).

Audrey Scott of [UncorneredMarket](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Minimize car use/ownership

We share one car between two adults. I've made my business to not require a commute, so I have no need to spend the money and use the resources of a car for everyone. Ride bicycles more than most would consider practical.

James Schipper of [Live Collar Free](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Realize the truth about money

Realize that money is a measurement of scarcity, not abundance (and certainly not value). The use of money encourages people to engage in corrupt behavior, which is behavior that does not serve the well-being of others, the environment or the world at-large. Sometimes corruption is motivated by a fear that self worth depends on how much money one has, which diminishes one's ability to act for the highest good. Therefore, be aware of what is most important in each moment and be open to embracing this by employing such strategies as conserving, sharing and gifting, instead of insisting that money is needed.

[Peter B. Roth](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Give to charity

During my travels, I have seen poverty that results from a combination of so many problems—lack of infrastructure, education, work, government support. It is truly heart-breaking because it seems like there is no easy solution. One way that I have found helpful is to support a good charity like Oxfam, UNICEF, or Children International.

Giving even \$10 a month to a charity is a positive step; if we all contribute even a little, it will make a great difference in the world. My family and I have also tried to cut out Christmas gifts and instead use the money for one-time donations to a favorite charity.

Jenna Francisco of [This is My Happiness](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.

~Confucius

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Think good

When you don't find yourself powerful enough to beat the bad or stop the bad, just do one thing, think good.

Zaheer Abbas of [UdaipurTimes](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Work less

One of the most important cultural shifts that need to occur in affluent societies is for people to trade market consumption for more time. Consume less, work less. If we live simply, we may find that we spend less and therefore are able to work less to provide for our basic needs. This should leave us with more time for those things that truly inspire us and make us happy (whatever that may be). It will also leave us with more time to engage meaningfully with our communities, local and global.

Samuel Alexander of [Simplicity Collective](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be frugal

Sure, looking for bargains when you shop helps you save money, so there's a great selfish reason to do it. But beyond that, being frugal is a good way to promote sustainability. When you're offered a deal on something, you're getting a powerful message: this item is plentiful and takes less labour or energy to produce than the alternatives. Listening to that message means you're directing your resources towards where they're used most efficiently. Sure, there can be exceptions, but generally speaking less cost means less resources used.

Ryan and Dina of [Vagabond Quest](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Give back

Give back, and remember that giving can be fun! After you reach the point where your basic needs are fulfilled and you don't need to struggle to pay your rent, for example, it's extremely important to reinvest what you've been able to accomplish into other people. Find a cause that you care about and give back 5% of your earnings, or more importantly, share your time. Find the rare opportunity to give back by mentoring someone else that you see promise in, or volunteering. It can be fun, like simply spending time with needy children like [Dwight](#) does. Or you can make a party out of it, and organize an event with all of your friends and colleagues to raise money for.

Cody McKibben of [ThrillingHeroics](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Being good is commendable, but only when it
is combined with doing good is it useful.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be social

There's something to be said for the hermetic genius quietly working on his calculations in the woods, but most innovations come from a ragtag collection of ideas, not just the spinning mental wheels of one individual. Even if you are an independent worker and don't do well in groups, exposing yourself to different people and ideas can only help your own personal endeavors by bringing to light different possibilities and approaches.

Colin Wright of [ExileLifestyle](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Stay relevant

Read the news. As often as possible. Staying up-to-date on both local and world news is important. It's important to be aware of what's going on around the world. Stay in touch and you stay relevant.

Adam Groffman of [Travels of Adam](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Under-think your life's purpose

Finding your "purpose" in life is an attractive ambition, and I'm sure there are plenty of people who've simply said "This is what I was born to do," but not everyone is as lucky as that. The simple alternative for the rest of us is to ask "What is the next useful action I can take?" Keep it simple - if you notice a problem that needs solving, solve it, and if you meet a person who needs help, help them.

[David Turnbull](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Ask a question

One person can make a difference. It's such a cliché, yet there's so much evidence of the truth in this statement. The obvious path in making a difference is to start taking action.

One step before taking action there's something else, another space to explore. A space that with practice could cause a paradigm shift and if you really want to rattle some beliefs to create change, it's here I'm suggesting you start.

Ask a question.

Socrates started this off by asking disciplined questions to pursue thought, explore ideas, open up issues and problems, and uncover assumptions. To present day asking the right questions works.

What if each day began with asking yourself a well formed question? Instead of asking why a situation is the way it is, feeling hopeless and resigned, ask how you might contribute. Instead of asking close-ended questions (yes/no) ask open-ended questions that create a space of possibility and move things forward.

Try these on and see what happens:

- * How can I contribute today?
- * What more can I do?
- * What one thing would make a difference to...?

Sandi Faviell Amorim of [Deva Coaching](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

The work an unknown good man has done is like a vein of water flowing hidden underground, secretly making the ground green.

~Thomas Carlyle

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Trust in yourself

The best thing you can do to make a difference in the world is to trust yourself. Trust your intuition, trust your power, trust your in your personal mission. Giving in to confusion will generate more confusion around yourself. It will just propagate the blindness and stress. Trust your own path, even if it's hard. Walking on known paths will never create a difference.

[Dragos Roua](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Question reality

Whenever I do anything, I seek to question "the way things are done around here!" especially if it means a chance at bucking the establishment. Establishments and rules and organizations are the keys to a healthy functioning society, but occasionally they get old and tired and people get so used to them that they forget to update their methods as life progresses and new technologies or realizations arrive.

Then life becomes a bloated bureaucracy where you can barely walk outside your door without filling out a form. Some people need that level of security and stability, but for most of us, it prevents us from completing our spiritual gifts and acts as a secret prison where life feels like a struggle. I always say that if you argue for your limitations you have to fight them, but if you discover your possibilities, you get to create them!

Too much reality intrusion tends to help you argue for your limitations, so I always question it and go my own way deciphering the burning fire of passion within. Tim Ferris once wrote that, "Reality is negotiable except for the law and science." You've got to work with gravitation and ethics, but other than that you are free to create your own reality given that you accept that others are also free to create theirs and there might be dissonant or harmonic interference patterns.

The key is to wake up each day and ask yourself what do you love doing most in life. And then get to it. Nobody is going to hold your hand and lead you to your passion in this mad world of to-do lists and anxiety. But when you declare your independence and begin governing yourself, you'll see all the former restraints and limitations fall away and you'll be truly free.

Kelly Phipps of [TravelingMagi](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

See through others

How much and to what degree you judge others is often a reflection of your own self-judgment. And one thing that helps with being more compassionate with others is to see through them, and to use the things that trigger you as a way to be reminded of their divinity. People are so much more than their physical bodies and egos. If you can see the divinity within them, you can transform those moments of judgment into appreciation.

Jonathan Mead of [IlluminatedMind](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

See yourself in others

All people on the planet are here with the shared experience of life and the desire for happiness. That means that we are all the same -- we share the most fundamental aspects of being human.

By recognizing this, I see myself in everyone around me. When I see other people at the supermarket or the faces of immigrants in my classroom, I see myself—the feelings of insecurity, joy, curiosity, impatience, etc. This allows me to feel greater empathy and connection with others and to then be more patient and open with everyone.

I hope that as we learn to live together and accept one another as equals, we will solve problems of inequality and poverty and foster a more prosperous world for everyone.

Jenna Francisco of [This is My Happiness](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I
can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do
interfere with what I can do.

~Edward Everett Hale

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Make something beautiful

You're able to do something that no one else can. Do that. Revel in it. Let yourself be overtaken by the creative impulse and lose yourself in the process. Everyone will benefit.

Steve Haase of [ThoughtLead](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be creative

Creativity runs in my whole family, in one form or another. We make things, we paint things, we sell them, we donate them. My art is out there in the world, and there's more of it in the making in my studio. Many of those who own something I've painted have a strong emotional bond with it.

Meg Wolfe of [Minimalist Women](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Hike and walk places

Not only does walking save money and spare pollution, it's a valuable way to gain exercise and feel better about yourself. It's not always possible to hike or walk places due to numerous variables, but for those short distances instead of being lazy, walking is well worth it! While traveling with no set schedule and no real destination in mind, I always try to walk places to get a better feel for the area.

Mark Wiens of [Migrationology](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Don't give up

There is no such thing as failure. Reaching your big, world changing goals will take a long time. Along the way, you will get frustrated and think that it was all in vain. Don't give up. A company can fail and go bankrupt, but you are not a company. You are a human being, and as long as there is blood running through your veins, you can keep kicking and screaming. Get back on your feet and put in the work you believe this world needs!

[Jarkko Laine](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

If everyone howled at every injustice, every act of barbarism, every act of unkindness, then we would be taking the first step towards a real humanity.

~Nelson DeMille

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Realize that we are one

The first thing to realize is that you are the world, that is to say your consciousness is one and same with the worlds' consciousness. We always see things as separate, that my consciousness is separate from the worlds problems. But when you realize deeply, feel it with your whole being, with your guts, that my consciousness is the worlds consciousness, that then makes me responsible.

So now what? I need to change myself, change my consciousness, and in effect changing the consciousness of the world. For thousands of years we have tried to change the world, but have neglected to see that first and last step is changing ourselves, in doing so we take responsibility for our actions and live in a harmonious way.

Now how do you change yourself? I can't help you out there. Sure I can give you some ideas, but that has no value. You need to go into it yourself. You need to inquire into it with a serious attitude, because these are serious matters. Humanity is in serious trouble.

[Ivan Campuzano](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Reconsider eating animals

Reconsider eating animals and animal products. Every creature on earth deserves to live the life they were given. Respect them as much as you respect your pets, your children, and yourself. A plant-based diet is actually more healthy anyway, so day by day, release yourself from your dependence on living creatures to satisfy your taste buds and, instead, embrace loving kindness.

Katie Tallo of [Momentum Gathering](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Live intentionally

Begin to make clearer choices about how you spend your days and what you're working on. With clear motivations and concrete goals, you'll be able to make a much greater impact.

Chris Guillebeau of [The Art of Non-Conformity](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Hold your ground

When faced with negativity, I tell myself no matter what the outcome looks like, no matter how loud everyone else is screaming, at the end of the day I won't be swayed: I will still hold true to my beliefs. Always.

Lynn Fang of [Upcycled Love](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

~Mahatma Ghandi

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Set an example and be a role model

Do not wake up thinking, "How I can change the world every day?" Instead, wake up thinking, "How can I live fully, completely, in the best way possible, so that I can set an example, so that I can be the role model of what I would like others to be?" Ask yourself, "How can I show more and tell less of what I would like to see in this world?"

Farnoosh Brock of [Prolific Living](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Give to those in need

What do most people do when they see a beggar? They pretend that they are not there. Next time you see a beggar and have some spare change, help them out by giving it to them even if it's just \$1. Not only will you help them for the next minute, hour, or day, but it sets up others to follow you too.

Hulbert Lee of [From Bottom Up](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Pass on your happiness

You are the most attractive you can be when you smile, and smiling is contagious. It is the easiest way to make a difference in the life of a friend or stranger simply by letting your face beam and passing on a bit of happiness in everyday life.

Jonny Gibaud of [The Life Thing](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Share what you do

Doing little things is powerful - but using those little things to inspire others changes the world. When you care intensely about a cause, a fight, a message, your passion is one of your most valuable assets. By sharing, defending, and spreading that passion, you can turn your individual contribution into the spark of a revolution.

Jeffrey Tang of [The Art of Great Things](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

If you have no will to change it, you have no right to criticize it.

~Author Unknown

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Replace meat and dairy in your diet

This is how I do it (and put a big smile on my own face). When switching from meat, don't feel overwhelmed or confused. Just replace! Remember, don't overeat – your body will be assimilating plant protein more quickly and easily.

"Fake meat" – the least healthy but most convenient way to go. Eat liberally as long as you need to (or until the gluten catches up with you – which it will if you're eating it every day).

Legumes - (beans, peas, lentils, including tofu). Burritos with refried beans, lentil soup, chick pea curry, marinated and fried tofu, scrambled tofu on toast (mmm). This is where it's at, people!

Nuts – good in small doses. Not a primary source of protein!

And for snacks on the run, try bananas from the fruit shop (don't need washing), hummus and crackers from the supermarket, or as I do, corn chips and bean salsa (mouth waters).

Try [Veg Cooking](#), the [Veg Coach Forums](#), or search [Amazon](#) for "vegan." There's a lot of help out there. Or just hook up with a long-time vegan who likes cooking.

[Ali Dark](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Reduce your overhead

Everyone spends too much on their lives. The funny thing is, when you stop spending so much you have more time to change the world. When your spending is out of control, the first casualty is your time -- because you have to work more to afford your lifestyle -- stop spending and you can free yourself.

Everett Bogue of [Far Beyond The Stars](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Shop conscientiously

When it comes to spending our money we should always bear in mind Vicki Robin's profound democratic insight: That how we spend our money is how we vote on what exists in the world. When we purchase something we send a message (consciously or unconsciously) to the marketplace affirming the product, its impact, its process of manufacture, etc. Accordingly we should aim to shop as conscientiously as we can by directing our monetary 'votes' into socially and ecologically responsible avenues and boycotting irresponsible avenues.

Samuel Alexander of [Simplicity Collective](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Create ripples of positivity

Over the years I've participated in or helped to organize beautification projects, and projects to benefit the arts and artists. Even after winding down such activities to focus on caring for my family, the results live on in some form or another. Positive action makes ripples, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Meg Wolfe of [Minimalist Women](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

This is the true joy in life - being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

~George Bernard Shaw

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Turn off the TV

It is easy to waste hours per day in front of the idiot tube. Turn on your brain and do something instead. Talk to family or friends. Clean your house. Go for a walk. Anything is better than doing nothing in front of a TV.

John Bardos of [JetSetCitizen](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Seek first-hand knowledge through travel

There is no better source of life-changing and horizon-broadening knowledge than putting ourselves in a position to observe, interact with and learn from the people, cultures and diverse life situations that we otherwise would never encounter.

Earl Baron of [WanderingEarl](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Stop buying so much

Although recycling is good, it should be considered a last resort. Everything you recycle still needs to be broken down and remade, so the best thing you can do is just cut back on the products you buy. Before recycling, try to find another use for the product or give it to someone else. Then, when all else fails, recycle the product.

Cutting back on purchases may seem hard at first but if you're looking for a fun and educational way of practicing, start traveling! This was one of the best experiences I had on limiting what you buy to what you truly need. Living out of a backpack prepares you for that. When you return home, you'll suddenly second-guess everything you buy and will be more likely to give away older items that you no longer use.

Matt Bailey of [A World of Inspiration](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Empathize

Empathy connects us all - empathy allows us to see that we are no different from each other, nor that much different from other living things. All people desire clean air, water, healthy food, shelter, close friends and family, and a meaningful place within their communities. Similarly, all living things require nourishment and the right environment to thrive.

At all times, I try to maintain a sense of empathy. It allows me to connect on a basic level with everyone. It also allows me to feel a connection with other living things. If we could all cultivate our sense of empathy, we could experience a much deeper connection with ourselves and our world.

Lynn Fang of [Upcycled Love](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

My life is my message.

~Mahatma Ghandi

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Form a creative ritual

I wake up with enthusiasm, a hot rebirthing shower, a steaming soy chai, and a little dance to express my current emotional and mental state.

As a writer, I love to sink into the depths of a coffee shop with another hot chai and bring several projects to work on, always open to the flow of inspiration. Even though I look strange doing this, I like to rub my hands together briskly to warm them up and then close my eyes with palms turned toward the heavens and visualize cosmic energy raining down into them.

I think ritual done with creative purpose is important to being a productive member of humanity, and we can all develop creative rituals that work for our unique lives.

Kelly Phipps of [TravelingMagi](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Be curious

By being curious you're assuring that you'll continue to strive and be passionate and learn new things. A lack of curiosity is what leads to stagnation - why look around or learn something new when you can just watch TV? - but a glut of it leads to stronger skill sets, a much girthier body of personal knowledge and a penchant for sharing (so that others will share with you).

Colin Wright of [ExileLifestyle](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Listen carefully

This is the hardest thing on my list, and I admit I'm not perfect. In a conversation, it's easy to focus on what you want to communicate, rather than what the other person is trying to tell you. However, this attitude risks misperceptions, misunderstandings, and missed opportunities to connect. Listening carefully is doubly important if the other person has a very different life experience and outlook due to age, ethnicity, or other factors.

Jennifer Barry of [LiveRichly](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Have gratitude

I once heard that the quickest way to change the world is to appreciate the way it is. I think that's true. The more you direct your energy toward the things you want to create, the more those things show up.

Jonathan Mead of [IlluminatedMind](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

My piece of bread only belongs to me when I know that everyone else has a share, and that no one starves while I eat.

~Leo Tolstoy

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat less!

Research consistently shows that eating fewer calories contributes to better health and may also increase longevity. At the same time, you will reduce your use of endangered energy resources like the fuel used to produce, transport, purchase, and cook your food. In these times of rampant obesity in adults and children, the average American still eats between 2,000 and 3,000 calories a day, which could be thoughtfully reduced to 1,500-2,000 wisely chosen, nutrient-dense calories.

Sandra Lee of [Always Well Within](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Split meals at restaurants

Restaurant portion sizes have gotten much bigger in recent years, usually supplying much more food than you need to eat. You end up stuffed with more calories than you need, and a lot of food ends up wasted. We save money and cut calories by splitting our main course when we go out for dinner. Usually servers are happy to split it, often even providing two separate plates with the meal split across them.

Ryan and Dina of [Vagabond Quest](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Eat your leftovers

How many people save leftovers one night and then forget about it or simply neglect it till it goes bad and must be tossed, or put those vegetables in the fridge never to be cooked? I'm not talking about being a freegan by going to restaurants or supermarkets and asking for expiring food. What I am talking about is just think about what you buy at the supermarket and what you cook and trying to finish all perfectly good food before it has to be wasted.

Mark Wiens of [Migrationology](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.

~Albert Pike

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Laugh

I don't know of any other human action more contagious than laughing. If you truly want to make a difference in the world then allow yourself to laugh. Spread the joy, don't keep it to yourself. And I'm not talking only about smiling (which is ok too, by the way). I'm talking about laughing out loud, every time you have the chance to do it.

[Dragos Roua](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Listen

When you're truly present with someone, a new possibility emerges. Oftentimes when we're "listening", we're paying more attention to ourselves than to the other person! So see if you can listen deeper. You just might be amazed.

Steve Haase of [ThoughtLead](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Go within

Meditation is useful for many things. It takes discipline, but when you learn to go within, you tap into a vast resource of confidence and wisdom. It also helps relax you and increases your mood, which in turn affects the people around you.

Henri Junttila of [Wake Up Cloud](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.

~Mother Teresa

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Recycle and reuse

With all the pollution, habitat destruction, overflowing landfills, and now the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, I want to avoid adding to the problem. I recycle cans and bottles, take my cloth bags to the market, and re-use items until they wear out. If I'm not using something, I donate it to someone who will, reducing my need for excess storage space.

Jennifer Barry of [LiveRichly](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Adapt

Things will not always go the way you've planned, but they almost always turn out fine. When something's going wrong, instead of trying to stop it, I adapt and react to it. More often than not, things turn out better than they would've if I'd stuck to my plan.

Jessica Reader of [Love and Trash](#)

Small Ways to Make a Big Difference

Practice patience

Complex problems that have taken years to come about take enormous time and effort to change. Even moving an inch in the right direction may take more sweat and patience than you ever bargained for but the results will be worthwhile and the fruits of your labor, however overdue they may be, shall arrive. You are not doing your work in vain so please do not give up.

Practice patience with meditation, focus, and community support. The world thanks you for what you are doing to change things for the better.

Farnoosh Brock of [Prolific Living](#)

Acknowledgements

While this ebook may have been organized and assembled by one person, it's not mine. It belongs to all the exemplary human beings listed below. This is not my ebook. It's theirs. I was simply a conduit for their positive energy -- the wind spreading their fires. Please visit their sites and support their work. They are living proof that where there is a will to make a difference, there is always a way.

Farnoosh Brock of Prolific Living

Ali Dark

Jarkko Laine

Hulbert Lee of From Bottom Up

Ivan Campuzano

Sandra Lee of Always Well Within

Lynn Fang of Upcycled Love

Angela Artemis of Powered by Intuition

Karen Ruby of A Meaningful Existence

Danny Cooper

Jennifer Barry of LiveRichly

Everett Bogue of Far Beyond The Stars

John Bardos of JetSetCitizen

Henri Junttila of Wake Up Cloud

Jenna Francisco of This is My Happiness

Katie Tallo of Momentum Gathering

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Steve Haase of ThoughtLead

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Mark Wiens of Migrationology

Meg Wolfe of Minimalist Women

Sandi Faviell Amorim of Deva Coaching

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If you have a blog, consider writing a short review of this book along with your own ideas for small ways to make a big difference (if you [email me](#) a link to the review, I will post a link back to it on this books' page).

If you know someone who wants to make a positive difference in the world, send them a copy or point them to this books' web page where they can download it:

<http://raamdev.com/ebooks/small-ways-big-difference>

If you have access to a printer, consider printing this guide and leaving it somewhere that others will flip through it (although I'd prefer you save the trees and send the electronic version instead).

But most of all, share the content in this book through setting an example for others to follow. As Mahatma Gandhi put it so eloquently, "you must be the change you wish to see in the world".

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

~Anne Frank