

## **Lightly: How to live a simple, serene, and stress-free life**

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### **Introducing oneself to Lightness:**

1. Start with a “Clean Slate”. (21)
  - Find all the multiples.
  - Once you’ve consolidated a category of items, count them. (23)
  - Consolidation is so powerful because it pinpoints these trouble spots, showing you exactly where you can lighten up. (24)
  - Pareto Principle: We use 20 percent of our stuff 80 percent of the time. (25) Start with the stuff you don’t use or don’t like. (26) Remember, space is just as important as stuff. (26)
2. Create an “Outbox”. (29)
3. Use an “On Hold” option as the first step towards making a psychological break with it. (32)
4. Let go of everything possible before containing it. (35)
5. Seek to Follow the Three R’s: Refine; Reign; Restraint.
  - Refining is more than decluttering; it’s seeking out all kinds of ways to live with less. (37)
  - Refining is making smart choices based on your needs, rather than what everyone else has or what advertisers tell you to have. (38)

**Aparigrapha:** Once we conquer possessiveness, we can understand the “how and why of life.” (44)

Consider the following areas to assess: Work clothes; Casual clothes; Formal clothes; Specialty clothes; Socks and underwear; Outerwear; Shoes; Handbags; Accessories; Dishware; Drinkware; Silverware; Entertaining ware; Pots/Pans; Bakeware; Small appliances; Kitchen tools; Junk drawer; Office supplies; Paperwork; Tech devices; Digital; Towels; Bedding; Books; Hobbies; Sentimental items; Gifts; Baby gear; Toys; Décor; Furniture.

It’s your memories, not the mementos, that are magical. (113) An object is merely a symbol. (114)

**Hara Hachi bu:** A Confucian teaching that means eat until you are 80 percent full. In other words, stop eating when you’re satisfied instead of when you’re stuffed. (135). To eat lightly is to eat in a harmonious, rather than harmful, manner. Regard each meal as a wonderful chance to commune with nature. (134)

**Buy lightly:** The things we buy don’t magically appear on retailers’ shelves. There’s a backstory to every item. Before you make a purchase, question both its human and environmental impact. Who made this item? What is it made of? How was this item made?

- Look for durability; seek out items with a lifetime guarantee:
- Consider style.
- Choose versatility.
- Keep your stuff going as long as possible. (154)

Access instead of acquire. (156)

**Ride lightly:** Explore – public transit; carpooling; work from home; biking; walking; consolidating errands. (160)

When we live lightly, we gain the clarity to discover our true purpose in life. That in turn helps us live lighter still, as we pay far less mind to things that don't contribute to our calling. (162)

**Dwell lightly:** A small home uses less energy; requires few resources; takes less stuff to fill it up; has less area to clean; allows for a smaller lot; many are older (form of recycling). Smaller homes are commonly located in high-density neighborhoods, close to urban centers. That means better walkability, and access to public transit and bike lanes. (165)

**Do less:** Just releasing that expectation makes you instantly feel lighter. Time is your most precious commodity, so curate: number of activities; community endeavors; your time and how you allocate it. The quality of what you do is far more important than the quantity. (172)

**Lightly decline:**

1. Express gratitude for the request.
2. Communicate that it just won't fit into your schedule.
3. Finally (and optionally), wrap up with a helpful suggestion.

When we lightly decline, we take the weight out of "no" by saying it in the simplest, most gracious way possible. When you refuse a request, don't feel obligated to apologize profusely or make elaborate excuses. Believe it or not, a simple, "I'd love to, but I'm overcommitted right now" will be understood and accepted by just about everyone. (174)

Overscheduling is one of the most significant causes of stress in our lives. Unschedule your time; scribble it out. Build little buffers of breathing room between commitments. (177)

**Stoicism:** The belief that negative feelings like anger, worry, and fear can be skillfully managed and minimized, because our happiness depends entirely on our perspective of things. Stoics were proponents of equanimity and practiced detachment. (181)

**Create Safety Nets:** Safety nets empower us to rise to our potential. Few trapeze artists would step off that platform without their assurance below. Safety nets give us confidence to take risks, reach higher, make that flying leap of faith without the fear of falling. Take stock of your personal safety nets: Financial; Professional; Medical; Social. (191)

Choreograph and Assign tasks. Develop routines and automation. (193)

Instead of perfect, aim for perfectly good. (196) When we aim for perfectly good, we cast off those unrealistic expectations. (197) Much of our stress comes from chasing traditional benchmarks of success. Why? Because they're usually someone else's idea of success. (199)

When we stop forcing our actions, we can do things with focus, with flow, and without exertion. (203)

**Live Your Light!**

Your light can be anything. Typically, its benefits reach beyond yourself. Use it as a filter for everything you do. When you try to do everything, your efforts are directionless. When you direct your energy toward a single pursuit – the one that stirs your soul – your potential for achievement is limitless. Most of

us spend our lives doing what we think we should do, or what others tell us to do. When you live your light, you spend your life doing what you're meant to do rather than what you're expected to do. When your life has direction, you no longer need distraction. Your light gives meaning to your life. (205)

Lift the weights from your heart: Stop; Slow down; Savor life. (210)

**Sophrosyne:** Ancient Greek virtue of taking joy in a temperate way of life. Three main facets: Mindfulness; Self-Control; Harmony.

Mindfulness – knowing when you've had enough.

Self-Control – Stopping at enough.

Harmony – Being happy with enough. (214)

The magnificent and paradoxical potential of emptiness: that once everything falls away, everything is possible.

**Ego:** One of the heaviest things you carry around is your ego. Your ego is supremely concerned about "me". It is what gets: Offended; Jealous; Insecure. (234)

The problem: Your ego is not your true self. It's just a psychological construct that comes with a lot of baggage. Your ego has no permanence. (234) Your ego thinks you're an island, when in reality we're all waves on the same ocean of consciousness. (236)

Meditation is a means to enlightenment. (246)