



## Don't sweat the small stuff...

Richard Carlson's advice is great when you're truly talking about small stuff. What if you don't agree that "it's all small stuff"? Anything that annoys you regularly has great potential, over time, to negatively impact your attitude and even working relationships. It's just like the dripping faucet that seems inconsequential, but can cost a lot over time. You're actually more likely to make a mountain out of a molehill if you don't address "the small stuff". So, do it constructively—and the sooner the better.

**Set a time to address the problem** – Don't wait until the next time the annoying behavior occurs and you're already irritated. Set a time to talk when you can both focus on the conversation.

**Plan for the conversation** – Ask yourself some questions that will help you present your concerns in a way that can be problem solved. What are the problems you encounter? How do those problems affect your ability to do your work? Remember to speak for yourself—don't make it "everyone's" problem.

**Explain your concerns** - Rather than simply criticizing the behavior, talk about the impact it has on *you*, something like "Amy, I know you and Beth are good friends and like to chat with each other over the cubicles. I need to talk with you about it because it's creating some problems for me and they are..." Then state the concerns, i.e., interruptions disrupt your ability to focus on work, distractions cause you to make mistakes, can't hear clients on the phone, etc.

**Problem solve together** – Listen to your co-worker's perspective and jointly explore options. Consider alternate ways for Amy and Beth to talk like email, instant messaging, or intercom. Can you wear a headset that blocks outside noise?

So, "don't sweat the small stuff" but do address those "dripping faucets" that can erode good working relationships.

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## Words to Live By...

"Remember, if you try to go it alone, then the fence that shuts others out also shuts you in."

Author Unknown



## A BRIGHT IDEA

### Pencils and happiness...

A recent University of California study found that most people have "smile muscles" which, when activated, tell your brain that you are happy. Your brain then releases the endorphins that make you *feel* happy. Just holding your pencil between your teeth is enough to "trick" your brain into thinking you are happy and releasing the endorphins. And you thought pencils were just for writing.

## Training Corner

Increasingly organizations recognize that leveraging the "soft skills" of their employees is the key to gaining that competitive edge in a challenging global economy. Fill your own toolbox with the skills that drive individual and organizational success. Learn to listen effectively, to be assertive without being confrontational, to problem-solve collaboratively and to build top notch performance teams. Learn more at [www.alternativeresolutions.biz](http://www.alternativeresolutions.biz) or contact us at 920-993-1490 to tailor training to your specific needs.

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