



## 50 THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER

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### Wisdom in a Nutshell

The book 50 Things That Really Matter tells of the simple pleasures of life--apart from the luxurious, fancy and extravagant possessions-- that gives people inner and deeper fulfillment. This promising gift book is a compilation of first-person stories of different people with their own unique experiences on the things that really do matter.

## 1. Wisdom

It was shortly after college, while this young man didn't know what to do with his life, that he met an elderly saxophonist, Lucky, who taught him wisdom and the great values that goes with it. Lucky would often tell him real life stories just like how a farmer would effortlessly toss away seeds from his hands. Little did the young man know that these anecdotes would serve as gold nuggets of wisdom that he would carry on through his life.

## 2. Warm Spring Days

This is a story of a young man's love for baseball. Though he never became a star of the Little League, baseball mirrored out the significance of his relationship with his dad. It was during the springtime ritual of playing catch with dad that he realized his father's dedication to be always around for him, no matter what. Thanks to the warm spring days.

## 3. Memories

In a small town dotted with cemeteries is a woman who believes that saying out loud the names of the people who have died is another way of remembering them--asserting that they will always be part of their families' precious memories. After 35 years of not seeing her grandmother's grave, this woman wished that somehow, someone is also walking her dog by the cemetery and taking time to read aloud from the worn out stone, the carefully carved name of her beloved grandmother.

## 4. Honest Work

Matt, exposed to hard work while he was just 10, teaches his wife lessons on devotion and honesty to one's work. For him, devotion is an opportunity of expression-- giving people a different kind of fulfillment to every work done.

## 5. Faith

Jeb, a man whose faith is rooted on old time miracles, missed how God had tried to rescue him amidst the dangers of the big flood. God sent a rowboat,

powerboat and a helicopter to Jeb's rescue but he didn't mind. Jeb didn't realize that God works in ways we sometimes don't understand and sends us gifts of comfort and protection that we don't always recognize.

## 6. Bubble Baths

Enjoying bubble baths, feeling its smooth and calming touch, is like setting out our spirits free. Bubble baths transcend great relaxation and exude something magical that makes us leave the past behind and reconnects us again with life.

## 7. Passion

A daughter, fascinated by how her father transforms everything that he touches into a wonderful work of art, saw something far beyond the father's talented hands. She saw passion. Believing that it is something everyone of us has, seated deep down in our hearts, waiting yet to be discovered--to fuel our soul, give our lives purpose, and to connect us into something larger than ourselves.

## 8. Puppies

After years of resisting the idea of getting a dog, Matt's wife finally relented. They, one day, got Lulu-- a yellow lab that taught them precious lessons about life, one lick at a time.

- Lulu Lesson #1: When you're really enjoying play, you don't care how foolish you look.
- Lulu Lesson #2: Parenting can make you neurotic than you've ever dreamed possible.
- Lulu Lesson #3: Ritual is a glue that holds love together.
- Lulu Lesson #4: Unconditional love is a renewable resource.
- Lulu Lesson #5: True communication is only possible when we don't apply upon language.

## 9. The Sound of Music

Here is a story of a man's realization of how music can define life. After growing up to be a man of notes and instruments, this man decided to shut himself from music of any form for a couple of years. One day,

however, while he was on top of the mountain, he had close encounter with silence. It was this time that he realized how the absence of music has brought sorrow and sadness into his life. He then decided to reclaim his old love for music and instruments. This brought him great joy and a wonderful discovery that the sound of music heals, touches, soothes and restores.

### 10. Seashells

Seashells, those little intricate colorful "houses" buried below the ocean's floors, are reflections of God's diverse and beautiful creation, fashioned for His own pleasure and satisfaction.

### 11. Candlelight

We, like the hottest part of a candle's flame, expel the same warmth and brightness to any surrounding that we are in.

### 12. Saying "I Love You"

Henry, the building custodian who happened to be the most popular and well-loved person in the university, never said "I love you". Instead, he lived it. He showed and expressed it through sincerest forms of concern, care and going extra miles for people. These and all other thoughts of love goes to say that "I love you" often has little to do with words.

### 13. Saying "I'm Sorry"

Owning up heals. Saying "I'm sorry" touches and frees up your soul as much as the person you have offended.

### 14. Flowers

Here's a touching story of a wife whose husband has been diagnosed of brain cancer and got ill for months. The wife never leaved her husband's side all throughout this time. She cared for him and loved him unconditionally. A year after the diagnosis, during his time of recovery, the wife received a bouquet of beautifully arranged flowers with the message: "I know this day last year was a lot longer

for you than it was for me. Thank you for being there then, now-and always."

### 15. Motherhood

First-time moms, expectant as they are, often feel disappointments during early stages of motherhood. Willa's mom is one of them. When Willa came to earth, her mom would always think that she's not good enough. Motherhood has become one strange word for her. Until one September day, when Willa was so absorbed by the fear of a brand new experience of riding a train, Willa showed her mom undivided trust-this faith of Willa made her mom experience the true essence of motherhood.

### 16. A Good Book

Neither good magazines, a number of words, nor any form of writing can measure up to a good book. A good book entertains and makes you see your truest self. It teaches you lessons, brings you to places and makes you feel so alive. If at one time you get a good book, treasure the moment and be grateful that such little object containing much more than what you expect, has found you.

### 17. Kindness

An encounter with the homeless people who sleep in cardboard boxes taught a group of friends the essence of kindness. It is from these homeless people that they learned kindness, given or received, is still the same. It is the trust and the willingness to share a cup of kindness that really matters.

### 18. Afternoon Naps

Afternoon naps become rare with age. The older you get, the lesser time you got to spend for them. Treasure afternoon naps. It is the only time of relaxation when you can be private, alone with yourself.

### 19. Friends

Friends come in different packages. Once in a while, they are there to "restore your faith in humanity".

Sometimes, they are there to "restore your faith in yourself."

### 20. Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms, with all their fury and rage, often pose threat to people. Yet to others, these are just lights and sounds of Mother Nature-created by God to be experienced and enjoyed like all other creations.

### 21. Sad Movies

Matt suggested to watch Disney's Beauty and the Beast with his stepsister. Romantic, and touching as it is, Matt was carried away by his emotions. Unashamed of his sniffles, this star football player and prom king let tears fall and admittedly said, "It's sad." They both got carried away and cried. Sad movies provide special moments for people to bond and connect in a very strange and special way.

### 22. Family

Every addition to one's family, no matter how extended it is, will always be a "gift from God." That was how Tong Yan has been to Peg and Bill, and to the rest of the clan.

### 23. Gratitude

This is a story of a daughter's gratitude to her mother who had to die of brain aneurysm two years back. Until now, memories of her mother bring laughter and deep gratefulness in her heart.

### 24. Quiet Time

Mother and daughter got accustomed to enjoying great music in their family care. However, there are times when mother would put off the music and say, "I just want quiet." Looking back, at her own maturity, the daughter now understands the essence of quietness. Quiet time is precious. It makes you appreciate more of the little overlooked sounds.

### 25. Independence

Leaving something behind and sailing off to new things, and hoping for the best to come our way is independence. However, leaving a place rich with all the good memories-like moving out of your childhood home-is independence burdened with emotions. Though hard, such kind of independence will eventually cause our souls and hearts to mature and prosper.

### 26. Imagination

Imagination is not just about seeing things. Imagination is about connecting things that we see-creating from these connections far more interesting wonderful stories. Imagination is like seeing the earth that we live in as enclosed inside a big blue ball.

### 27. Contentment

Contentment is accepting, with happiness, the things that come your way-whether be it a trip missed or a long, disappointing and tiring journey. Contentment is not having the things that you want, it is simply being grateful for the things that you now have.

### 28. Milestones

Milestones are unique to every individual. Whatever form they take, milestones are mirrors of how far we've gone in the journey of life. Thus, they must be celebrated and recognized.

### 29. Hugs

It is the once-in-a-lifetime hug of an indifferent father to his son that gave hugging a new kind of light. It is more than just physical contact-it is actually a deep connection, a link of love, an indescribable gift that needs to be shared, not suppressed.

### 30. Sunrise

Sunrise is not meant to be rushed. It comes only when we are ready to its majestic rays and glaring beauty.

### 31. A Child's Art

As a way of saying thanks, a child sent the nature guide of an organic farm her own simple work of art. On the card is a drawing of a girl beaming with the warmest smile, with arms spread wide open, and welcoming the school bus that arrived. This child's work or art is a reminder to learn to accept and embrace any kind of bus of life that passes us by.

### 32. The Smell of a New Baby

This is a story of a mother who smelled life in her new-born son. Tangy, sweet, funky or fresh, the smell of her new baby always set a feeling that she also had just been born.

### 33. Romance

Romance can take many forms. It can be watching the moonlight, a walk in the woods, or a good candle lit bath. Whatever form it takes, romance will always play a great part in any relationship.

### 34. Holidays

For someone with a sad past of seeing her parents divorce as early as five, holidays have become more than just good food and happy times. For her, holidays are times of being together, bringing the family-- no matter how divided it is-- even closer.

### 35. Trust

"If, like a dedicated cider man, we continue to set out our best handiwork for one another and hope for the best, there will always be enough cracks of light left in the dark to lure good neighbors to one another's harvests."

### 36. Sympathy

Sympathy is far beyond the funeral flowers that we offer. It is simply being there, without any words necessary.

### 37. Holding Hands

If done at a special moment, holding hands can do much more like restoring a friendship gone cold.

### 38. Charity

Charity is compassion in action. It may take any form, like caring for homeless people, but it will always be founded in one truth--that charity is an active manifestation of God's love for the world.

### 39. Summer Nights

A story about two sisters who found solace waiting for the starlit summer nights, not having seen a long awaited shooting star but knowing deep inside that dreams and wishes were made to come true.

### 40. Old Dogs

Seeing a dog grow old and struggle with each passing time is painful. Yet every excruciating exercise that goes with it gives us lessons in life that we will forever cherish.

### 41. Family Dinners

Family dinners, aside from being soothing breaks, are that special time to bond and connect, not only with the members of the family, but to its past and ancestral roots as well.

### 42. A Good Cup of Coffee

For some, a good cup of coffee is not only a time to ease out and relax. It also a tradition that strengthens the bond of a mother and a child.

### 43. Curiosity

Curiosity is a gift in so many ways. It teaches you to appreciate, relieves you of anxious thoughts, draws into you new interests, and makes you see the world in a lot larger perspective. Do the things of the child--take curiosity from this view and you'll be amazed as you see the world opens up around you.

#### 44. A Sense of Wonder

A daddy's portrayal of Santa Claus every Christmas opened a sense of wonder and amazement to his little daughters' eyes-giving them memories of childhood they would carry on.

#### 45. Hope

Amelia, as early as 4-years old, got exposed to the trauma of seeing her grandmother suffered a massive stroke attack. Deep in her coma, the doctors offered no assurance. They all lost hope, except for Amelia. One day, with reasons even the doctors can't understand and explain, Amelia's grandmother woke up and after time of recovery, returned home. It is the hope of the child-with all its wonder and joy-that brought Amelia's grandmother back.

#### 46. Companionship

Companionship doesn't end with death. It just takes a different form-one that is more intimate.

#### 47. Home

A young man has a unique way of approaching landscape designs. He would ask people to sketch in their minds their idea of a beautiful outdoor setting. After this, he would ask them to bring home such visions into their backyards-adding things that would depict what they have drawn in their minds. This practice conveys that homes are not just a place to stay, but rather are expressions of our inner selves, our own being.

#### 48. Butterflies

Butterflies, with all its grace as their wings of different colors glide effortlessly from flower to flower, are created for a simple purpose-to inspire and remind us that beauty truly exists.

#### 49. Courage

The Mennonites of Pennsylvania are hooked on their

own long-established traditions. They, even if the rest of the world is already swirling on the latest technologies, insist on their simple way of living--grounded on honesty, hard work and commitment. They are courageous enough to stick to their simple traditions, content with the choice they made and, not afraid to stay put behind because on where they chose to be, others still count on them.

#### 50. You

Life is not all about pleasing others and doing the "shoulds". Life is all about you. Love yourself and approve of it. Focus on your dreams and needs. Choose to be happy. Remember, you are the one responsible for your happiness, not the people around you.