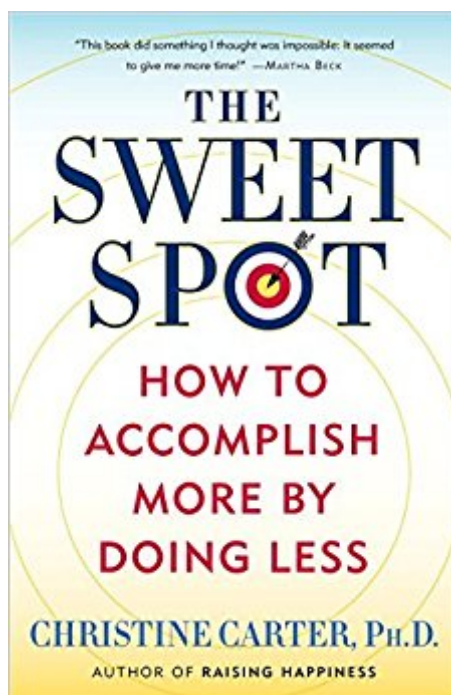


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# The Sweet Spot: How To Accomplish More By Doing Less



## Synopsis

Learn how to achieve more by doing less! Live in that zone you've glimpsed but can't seem to hold on to—the sweet spot where you have the greatest strength, but also the greatest ease. Not long ago, Christine Carter, a happiness expert at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center and a speaker, writer, and mother, found herself exasperated by the busyness of modern life: too many conflicting obligations and not enough time, energy, or patience to get everything done. She tried all the standard techniques—prioritizing, multitasking, delegating, even napping—but none really worked. Determined to create a less stressful life for herself—without giving up her hard-won career success or happiness at home—she road-tested every research-based tactic that promised to bring more ease into her life. Drawing on her vast knowledge of the latest research related to happiness, productivity, and elite performance, she followed every strategy that promised to give her more energy—or that could make her more efficient, creative, or intelligent. Her trials and errors are our reward. In *The Sweet Spot*, Carter shares the combination of practices that transformed her life from overwhelmed and exhausting to joyful, relaxed, and productive. From instituting daily micro-habits that save time to bigger picture shifts that convert stress into productive and creative energy, *The Sweet Spot* shows us how to say “no” strategically and when to say “yes” with abandon. Make decisions about routine things once to free our minds to focus on higher priorities. Stop multitasking and gain efficiency. “Take recess” in sync with the brain's need for rest. Use technology in ways that bolster, instead of sap, energy. Increase your ratio of positive to negative emotions. Complete with practical “easiest thing” tips for instant relief as well as stories from Carter's own experience of putting *The Sweet Spot* into action, this timely and inspiring book will inoculate you against “The Overwhelm,” letting you in on the possibilities for joy and freedom that come when you stop trying to do everything right—and start doing the right things.

ONE OF GREATER GOOD'S FAVORITE BOOKS OF THE YEAR “[For fans] of a certain kind of self-improvement book—the kind, like *The Happiness Project* or *168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think* or *Getting Things Done*, that offers up strategies for making certain areas of life work better without requiring that you embrace a new belief system.” —KJ Dell'Antonia, *The New York Times* (Motherlode blog) “A breath of fresh air . . . Based on personal experiments with living life in what she calls the ‘pressure cooker,’ Dr. Carter offers advice in easily digestible nuggets. • Working Mother “Carter gives

actionable ways to balance your life, your health, and your career. This book is packed with smart advice and hard-earned wisdom. **Inc.** “Learn more about escaping the busyness trap, and uncovering a happier, less stressed you. **Shape** “A highly readable, diligently researched advice book that offers concrete tips on how to get off the treadmill of busyness. **Greater Good** “Chock-full of concrete tips on how to sharpen your focus, improve your efficiency, and use technology to your advantage. **The Week** “Illuminates the simple and sustainable path toward a precious and happy balance. **Deepak Chopra** From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“If you, like me, are a fan of a certain kind of self-improvement book—the kind, like *The Happiness Project* or *168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think* or *Getting Things Done*, that offers up strategies for making certain areas of life work better without requiring that you embrace a new belief system—then I have a new book for you . . . *The Sweet Spot*. **KJ Dell’Antonia**, *The New York Times* (Motherlode blog) “With all the agonizing about having it all, UC Berkeley sociologist **Christine Carter, PhD**, blows us a breath of fresh air with her five-step, common-sense primer *The Sweet Spot: How to Find Your Groove at Home and Work*. Based on personal experiments with living life in what she calls the *pressure cooker*, Dr. Carter offers advice in easily digestible nuggets. **Working Mother** “Carter gives actionable ways to

balance your life, your health, and your career. This book is packed with smart advice and hard-earned wisdom.

•Inc. “Learn more about escaping the busyness trap, and uncovering a happier, less stressed you.”

•Shape “A highly readable, diligently researched advice book that offers concrete tips on how to get off the treadmill of busyness.”

•Greater Good “Carter’s transformation from overwhelmed working mom to productive and relaxed human being will inspire you. [The Sweet Spot] is chock-full of concrete tips on how to sharpen your focus, improve your efficiency, and use technology to your advantage.”

•The Week “Carter translates her knowledge of the psychology and neuroscience of happiness into practical advice for navigating the demands of modern life.”

•Publishers Weekly “Illuminates the simple and sustainable path toward a precious and happy balance.”

•Deepak Chopra “A gift, like a good friend drawing a personal road map out of the crazy busy swirl of our overloaded lives.”

•Brigid Schulte, author of *Overwhelmed* “This book did something I thought was impossible: It seemed to give me more time.”

•Martha Beck, author of *Finding Your Way in a Wild New World* “A page-turning thriller full of proven ways to have the life you want.”

•Rick Hanson, Ph.D., author of *Hardwiring Happiness* “Timely, lively, and vital, *The Sweet Spot* is an immediately useful must-read.”

•Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage* “The Sweet Spot inspired me to make immediate changes that have increased my productivity and lowered my stress.”

•Dan Mulhern, president, Granholm Mulhern Associates “Refreshing, timely, and inspiring, *The Sweet Spot* will help you focus on what really matters most.”

•Renée Peterson Trudeau, author of *The Mother’s Guide to Self-Renewal* “The Sweet Spot is worth finding, and Christine Carter teaches us how.”

•Lucy Danziger, co-author of *The Nine Rooms of Happiness* “A must-read for every overworked executive, overwrought parent, or overscheduled human being.”

•Jennifer Granholm, governor of Michigan, 2003–2011 “Compelling and practical . . . You will learn exactly how to create a much sweeter life!”

•Christiane Northrup, M.D. From the Hardcover edition.

Christine Carter, Ph.D., is a sociologist and happiness expert at UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center, an interdisciplinary research center that “translates the study of happiness, resilience, and emotional intelligence for the public. The author of the bestselling

Raising Happiness, Dr. Carter blogs regularly for Greater Good, The Huffington Post, and Psychology Today. She has appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, The Dr. Oz Show, Rachael Ray, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, Today, and NPR, and has helped thousands of people lead happier and more productive lives through her lectures and online classes. Her e-newsletters have more than fifty thousand subscribers. She lives with her husband, children, and stepchildren in Berkeley, California.

~ ~ This is one of the best (and most realistic) books I've read about how to live a more balanced and content life--even in the midst of so much "busyness." There was a ton here that I found helpful, and I've already integrated some of Carter's suggestions into my daily routines. And I even saw positive results almost immediately--seriously! (Though I will say, in the interest of full disclosure, that I am a stay-at-home mom and writer, so I think I am THE target audience for this book, which may be part of the reason why it has worked so well for me.) Sweet Spot is broken down into five sections. I have many favorite tid-bits from each part, but, for the sake of brevity, I'll just hit the highlights. Part One emphasizes the importance of focused work and rest times--specifically how important it is to experience good, quality chunks of both--and then goes on to offer very practical advice on how to increase the number and intensity of positive emotions you feel in your life. (On a side note, I was really skeptical that striking a pose like Wonder Woman for two minutes would actually make me feel more confident, but it did!) Parts Two and Three were by far my favorites. Part Two discusses the importance of transforming as many recurring actions, tasks, chores, etc., into automatic habits. I learned what a workhorse my subconscious is, how surprisingly capable it is of pulling much more weight if I just take 30 seconds to create a new habit that it can then just roll with. (I found the "formula" of "After I do THIS, then I will do THAT" to be a very effective and simple way of creating a habit. So, for example, "After I put the baby down for his nap in the afternoon, I will write for two hours" was all it took. It's simple--and maybe embarrassingly obvious--but it worked for me.) I also put Carter's advice on reaching goals into action almost immediately and planned out a better morning routine for myself and my kids. And thanks in part to Part Three, which talks about knowing your top five priorities and then spending 95% of your time on ONLY those things, I have been able to create a daily routine that feels meaningful and realistic--and, therefore, actually doable--to me. Part Four discusses the importance of cultivating relationships, how good relationships--whether with lifelong friends or barely-met acquaintances--have the power to make us feel content, safe, comforted, and connected. Part Five is all about how to deal with uncomfortable feelings, such as when we feel discouraged, afraid, overwhelmed, or lost. At the end of each chapter

is a short section called "The Easiest Thing," where Carter suggests one incredibly simple way to translate her ideas into action. She dumbs it way down so even a child could perform these tasks, but, somehow, I never felt condescended to; I actually felt proud of myself for accomplishing something. Ultimately, I absolutely loved this book from start to finish. It was so relevant to my life, so practical and genuinely helpful. And because Carter references an impressive selection of books in Sweet Spot (including some of my recent favorites like: (\*) *Â Mind Over Medicine: Scientific Proof That You Can Heal Yourself*, (\*) *Â Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time*, (\*) A journal publication by John Gottman [but I like *Â The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*], (\*) *Â Outliers: The Story of Success*, (\*) *Â Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder*, and (\*) *Â Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study*), I now have a few more happiness- and wellness-related books lined up in my to-be-read queue, including: (\*) *Â The Talent Code: Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How.*, (\*) *Â Stumbling on Happiness*, and (\*) *Â The Martha Beck Collection: Essays for Creating Your Right Life, Volume One (Volume 1)*. I am excited to keep reading!

As a former journalist, I interviewed Dr. Carter years ago, after reading *Raising Happiness*. What I learned from her has guided how I chose to raise my teenage sons (moving to New Zealand to find the time and space to dedicate to doing that). I now have *The Sweet Spot* in my collection and am thrilled to see the same genuine person (and sharp as a tack intellect) boil down to baby steps habits that can transform your life. I will add her tips to my coaching, as well as to my own life.

Sweet Spot is a Sweet Book! Dr Carter writes knowledgeably, humorously, and candidly to help the reader get their groove back. She has a masterful grasp of the research and theory, and an expert grasp of how to communicate it effectively. BTW: you may want to check out her YouTube videos to get a sense for her work.

This book is greatness. It helped me to organize my time so much better and more productively. It is a must read for anyone who feels like they are on a hamster wheel of busyness while never accomplishing what they really want to achieve. This book will definitely help you shift your mindset.

Read it twice and took notes! Some very good pointers and reality checks.

I use helpful hints from this book every day. I bought the book for my mom somewhat sheepishly (how does it go over when you buy your mom a self help book?). She loved it and has bought it for other people as a gift. It's a great way to get more out of your day.

Quite simply, a life changing book. Christine Carter's style is refreshing and absolutely resonated with me. I have read and re-read it and love this book!

Lots of practical tips & fun anecdotes about how to realistically live your life with more ease. I am absolutely going to pass this book along to a friend and plan on buying them for my managers at work.

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