**Excerpts from "How to be Perfect"**

by [Ron Padgett](http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/author.php?auth_id=1206)

Get some sleep.  
  
Eat an orange every morning.  
  
Be friendly. It will help make you happy.  
  
Hope for everything. Expect nothing.  
  
Take care of things close to home first. Straighten up your room  
before you save the world. Then save the world.  
Be nice to people before they have a chance to behave badly.  
  
Don't stay angry about anything for more than a week, but don't  
forget what made you angry. Hold your anger out at arm's length  
and look at it, as if it were a glass ball. Then add it to your glass   
ball collection.  
  
Wear comfortable shoes.  
  
Do not spend too much time with large groups of people.  
  
Plan your day so you never have to rush.  
  
Show your appreciation to people who do things for you, even if  
you have paid them, even if they do favors you don't want.  
  
After dinner, wash the dishes.  
  
Calm down.  
  
Don't expect your children to love you, so they can, if they want   
to.  
  
Don't be too self-critical or too self-congratulatory.  
  
Don't think that progress exists. It doesn't.  
  
Imagine what you would like to see happen, and then don't do  
anything to make it impossible.  
  
Forgive your country every once in a while. If that is not   
possible, go to another one.  
  
If you feel tired, rest.  
  
Don't be depressed about growing older. It will make you feel   
even older. Which is depressing.  
  
Do one thing at a time.  
  
If you burn your finger, put ice on it immediately. If you bang  
your finger with a hammer, hold your hand in the air for 20  
minutes. you will be surprised by the curative powers of ice and  
gravity.  
  
Do not inhale smoke.  
  
Take a deep breath.  
  
Do not smart off to a policeman.  
  
Be good.  
  
Be honest with yourself, diplomatic with others.  
  
Do not go crazy a lot. It's a waste of time.   
  
Drink plenty of water. When asked what you would like to   
drink, say, "Water, please."  
  
Take out the trash.  
  
Love life.  
  
Use exact change.  
  
When there's shooting in the street, don't go near the window.

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