

***The Not So Big Life* Talking Points:**

- The bigger-is-better idea that triggered the explosion of McMansions in home design has spilled over to give us McLives.
- In her bestselling Not So Big House series, Sarah Susanka showed us how to change the way we live by adjusting the physical space we inhabit.
- Now, in *The Not So Big Life* Susanka takes her revolutionary philosophy a giant step further by showing us how to change the way we live by fully inhabiting each moment of our lives.
- *The Not So Big Life* reveals that form and function serve not only architectural aims, but life goals as well. Just as we can tear down interior walls to open up space, *The Not So Big Life* shows us that we can tear down our fears, assumptions and conditionings in a way that opens us up to new possibilities so we can start engaging the things we long to do.

**Q: What is a Not So Big Life?**

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A: A Not So Big Life is one in which you learn to **listen to what your heart longs to do, and to integrate these passions into your everyday life.** By making time for what you are truly passionate about, and by letting go of old behavior patterns that cause you to keep feeling trapped by life, shifts will occur that allow you to learn more about who you really are and to **live each experience as it comes, engaging it completely.**

A Not So Big Life begins a process of inner transformation. It happens simply because **when you engage what you are truly passionate about, you are automatically present in what you are doing** — you are showing up completely in your life and in each moment. Life becomes a natural expression of what you love to do — of your true nature. Through this process, you'll find more meaningfulness, vitality and that sense of being “at home” in life that so many people are searching for today.

A Not So Big Life gives you more room to breathe and to engage the things you really love rather than living in the past or the future all the time, dreading the next activity and feeling drained because you're not even sure why you're doing it. **It shows us the way to become “human beings” rather than “human doings.”**

**Q: How will you know you're living a Not So Big Life?**

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A: You'll find your life will morph from being too big, too fast and too frustrating, to a vastly more manageable pace and clarity. **Time will no longer be a foe to do battle with,** but will start to flow and open in unexpected places that allow you to fully engage what's in front of you, as well as in the things you care about.

The **unexpected revelation of *The Not So Big Life* is that it is entirely within everyone's reach.** It requires no extraordinary measures to attain, other than to pay attention to what is actually happening, to look at things a little differently, and to use each

experience to help you see who and what you really are. It is a life in which every moment and every experience becomes your teacher; and the result is a life that is rich, and full, and extraordinarily satisfying.

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**Q: Why should people read *The Not So Big Life*?**

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A: I really believe we're at **crisis point**. We find ourselves more and more taxed by daily circumstances, and less and less able to understand what is moving us. **We're over-stimulated, racing through our lives on fast forward and running on automatic, all of which deprive us of the very nourishment we need to thrive.**

This book provides an important key to resolving these frustrations and will give readers a method to tackle their everyday lives in a new way. ***The Not So Big Life* puts the tools for transformation into your own hands**, so that you'll have the ability to recognize what's missing from your life and understand what's needed to remedy the situation.

I think we will find the book's audience enormous and extremely varied in its characteristics — from a top executive in a Fortune 500 company to a working mother and everything in between.

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**Q: How does *Not So Big* relate to house design?**

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A: **“Not So Big” encapsulates an attitude about life *and* house design.** My previous books have attracted an audience of people who care deeply about the *quality* of their lives, rather than sheer *quantity* of what they own.

A *Not So Big house* focuses on quality of space rather than quantity. It inspires its inhabitants everyday, serving as both a personal expression and a reflection of the homeowners. It's about feeling comfortable and inspired, rather than impressing the neighbors. In terms of size, it's typically about one third smaller than you thought you needed, but just as expensive — with dollars reapportioned out of square footage and into character and tailoring for the way we *really* live.

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**Q: Is there a common message in your house design books and *The Not So Big Life*? If so, what is it?**

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A: **It's this: We are all searching for a sense of home, but we are searching with the wrong tool.**

The messages in all my books are very similar in nature, but in *The Not So Big Life* the medium is *life* instead of *house* and the dimension being reconsidered is *Time* instead of *Space*.

In house design, we're searching with square footage, when in fact the sense of home has almost nothing to do with size. To be at home in our lives we have to feel a sense of meaningfulness that derives from being completely engaged in and delighted by our daily

activities. And that comes from the quality of our experience in those engagements, not the quantity of things done or goods accumulated. So the parallel message in *The Not So Big Life* is that we're searching with constant activity, when in fact the sense of being at home in our lives has nothing to do with WHAT we do. Instead it has to do with HOW we do everything. We have to actually show up in what we are doing — to really be there; which requires that we learn some new behavior patterns.

**Q: Why did you write *The Not So Big Life*? How have you made the transition from house design to life design?**

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**A: As an architect, it's natural for me to recognize the order that underlies what we see on the surface of things.** Architects have a unique ability to perceive the underlying order of things — whether that's the structure of a building or the dynamics of a conversation. **This underlying order is what I see and understand in house design. Now, I'm exploring the underlying order in life design.**

Through observing, studying and personally living a Not So Big Life, I've been able to understand and articulate the lessons I've been learning. **I've learned that life is the true teacher of how to live more fully and when you learn how to pay attention, its lessons are delivered to your doorstep daily.**

For example, in *The Not So Big Life*, I describe an epiphany when I realized that if I didn't make the time to write, I'd never have the opportunity to pursue my primary passion and my true heart's desire. Without knowing how it would work, or how my work as an architect would get done, I simply started to write. By giving myself permission to take the time to write, I allowed myself to start living what I now call a Not So Big Life — a life that is attuned to revealing ever more of one's true potential. Once you make the commitment to yourself, everything else works out — not in a way that you can imagine ahead of time, but in a way that perfectly supports who you are becoming by following your heart's desire.

**Q: How have your house design books been embraced by readers?**

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**A: It's extraordinary to experience just how powerfully these books have affected readers. Although the series has been ostensibly about architecture, many readers relate to these books as guides for how to live a life well.** I hear from thousands of readers each year about how much richer their lives have become as a result of my books. It has been truly life changing for many.

***The Not So Big House* quickly climbed to number one on Amazon.com in all categories** shortly after its release in 1998. NotSoBigHouse.com has an average of **40,000 individual hits per month** and an engaged audience from around the world. It is an important tool that allows readers to find the resources and support to make their own

home “Not So Big.” I often describe the books as the seeds of the idea, and the Web site as the tree. Although the Web site is perhaps less visible, it plays an important role in the success of the “Not So Big” movement.

**Q: How well have the books been received?**

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A: Over the years, I have **received much recognition for my work.** This personal acclaim is really a recognition of the need for “Not So Big” in all aspects of our lives.

Here are just a few highlights since my first book:

- **Fast Company** named me a “Fast 50” innovator whose achievements have helped to change society;
- **Newsweek** magazine selected me as a “top newsmaker” for 2000; and,
- **U.S. News & World Report** called me an “innovator in American culture.”
- In 2004, **Builder Magazine** ranked me as 14 out of 50 “Power Brokers.”
- That same year, **Organic Style** magazine named me to their “Environmental Power List.”

None of these accolades are about architecture and design alone. They’re really about something that isn’t apparent on the surface of things — they’re a recognition that the “moreness” we’re seeking is a quality and not a quantity. All these accolades acknowledge that “Not So Big” is a sensibility whose time has come.

**Q: Who reads your Not So Big House series and *Home By Design* books? Who do you think will read *The Not So Big Life*?**

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A: **People who see that home is a state of mind as much as it is a place.** Often such people value balance and harmony in their lives and surroundings, and are searching for a sense of inner as well as physical well-being. It’s clear that many people are drawn to the Not So Big series and *Home By Design* not so much because of their homes, but because it helps them to see how to use their houses to balance their lives.

**I believe people will flock to *The Not So Big Life* just as they did to *The Not So Big House*.** Since 1998, “Not So Big” has taken on greater meaning. The phrase encapsulates the values that have the power to help us rebalance our lives and in so doing, the world as a whole. As we make ourselves at home in our lives, we bring the world home too.

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