The following pages are excerpts from the book titled "Inspired Nurse Too" by Rich Bluni, RN.

It is provided as a sample of the book’s content in order to give the reader a sense of what the actual book is like.
To my amazing, beautiful wife, Dawn, an inspired nurse in her own right. I am truly blessed and lucky to be your husband.

To my children, Rhett, Luke, and Ava, whom I love with all I am and adore beyond words. You fill my life with a joy I never before thought possible.

To the memory of my “first best friend,” David J. Hernandez. You are so loved and missed. No one made me laugh like you. Batman forever.
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CHAPTER 1

THE LITTLE THINGS

My speaking career means that I’m often on the road for long stretches. Not too long ago, I was returning home late on a Friday after traveling to five cities in five days. Now don’t get me wrong—I love what I do. Inspiring and motivating others, from huge audiences to small groups, is my passion.

That said, unless you’re Beyoncé and have your own luxury jet, traveling isn’t always as glamorous as it sounds. Squeezing into seats that seem to be designed by the same person who designed my kindergarten-aged son’s desk chair, delayed flights, missed connections, no sleep, loud hotels, and bad weather would be bad enough. But then sometimes, there are intoxicated seat mates who want to talk endlessly about their UTI/divorce/struggle with halitosis/not being able to smoke on planes anymore/probation officer having an attitude.

Actually that was a real-life conversation, and it was one person who discussed all of the above. He declined my multiple offers for a mint so I eventually pretended to fall asleep. However, he continued to drink and talk…to me…while I pretended to sleep. Eventually he
became violently ill all over the head of the person sitting in front of him, who then put him in a headlock. Another passenger and I had to break up the fight, which resulted in all of us having at least some vomit on ourselves. I know…sexy, huh? (Some of you are thinking, Sounds like the ER on a Tuesday!) Like I said, travel ain’t glamorous!

Anyway, my point is, I was a little worn out from a crazy week and was really missing my wife and family. Before the last leg of my journey, I called my wife to let her know that my flight was delayed and that I wouldn’t be walking in the door until after midnight. With a four-year-old son keeping her busy, sleep was a precious commodity for Dawn, and she usually went to bed early. So I was surprised when she said, “I want to wait up for you. I’ve really missed you this week. And, well, let’s just say I have a little surprise for you tonight!”

Was it me, or did her voice sound a little more sultry than usual? Now I really couldn’t wait to get back. I even listened to Pharrell’s “Happy” on repeat during that final flight! Soon, I was back on home turf. I’d been driving and flying since early morning, so I wanted to freshen up a bit before receiving my “surprise.” I beelined for the airport men’s room.

In the middle of my “personal upkeep and beautification,” I noticed a gentleman wearing a travel-wrinkled suit standing next to me at the sink. As I spritzed myself with some fancy-Italian-designer-named fragrance, he looked at me as if to say, “Cologne, really?” I just smiled at this total stranger and said, “I’ve been on the road for a week. My wife said she really misses me, wants to wait up, and has a surprise for me when I get home!” He looked at me for a few seconds as my words sunk in. He didn’t say a word—just lifted his hand to give me a high five.
Having finally tired of Pharrell’s “Happy,” I tuned into the love jams satellite station on my drive home. Luther Vandross, Marvin Gaye, all the good stuff. In no time, I was pulling up to The Love Shack—I mean, my house. The first thing I noticed when I walked in was the sweet smell of cinnamon. Was it incense? Some new aromatherapy candles? *Wow, she’s going all out.*

And there was my beautiful wife…wearing her robe. Not the really cute one I bought her for Valentine’s Day. You know, the red silky one with the black lace. No. Not that one. The other one. You know which one. Instead of Frederick’s of Hollywood, I was seeing more JC of Penney. I was a little confused, but, well, whatever. No problem here. She’s gorgeous! She makes velour look like silk. Plus, I was in work clothes, so who was I to judge?

At this point, Dawn kind of sashayed over to me and gave me a long hug and a longer kiss. I know it was especially good for her, as I had not only brushed the heck out of my teeth at the airport, but had also eaten an entire bag of Skittles on the way home. She was tasting the rainbow! “I missed you…A LOT,” she purred.

“I missed you, too,” I managed to sputter.

“Ready for your surprise?” she asked demurely.

“Uh…yeah,” I responded, feeling dizzy. (Yes, I was that psyched—but in retrospect, some of my dizziness also could’ve been attributed to the sugar crash from the recently consumed bag of Skittles.)

Dawn stepped back and said, “Open the oven.”
“What?” I was confused.

She repeated, “Open the oven.” So I did, and quickly saw where the cinnamon smell was coming from. Oh…snacks…cool! “Well, what’s in the oven?” Dawn prompted.

“Cinnamon rolls?”

She laughed. “No, what’s in the oven?”

Looking again, I guessed, “Uh, pecan rolls?”

Dawn looked exasperated. “Okay, honey, this is your surprise, so pay attention. What’s…in…the…oven?”

I’m thinking, Great, what are we playing, Words with Friends? I think I said something like, “Babe, I don’t know. Toaster strudel?” I was beginning to wonder if I had wasted a tube of toothpaste and a bag of Skittles. I was expecting Fifty Shades of Grey, and this was looking more and more like Every Day with Rachael Ray. On top of that, it was close to 1:00 a.m., and my brain was not its usual ninja-quick self. “Honey I don’t get it. I’m sorry.”

With a sigh, Dawn said, “Okay, where do you love to get cinnamon rolls from?”

I thought for a second and then I said, “Uh…Cinnabon!”

She said, “Okay, so go slow with that in mind. What’s in the oven?”

I replied, “Cinnabon?”
Dawn said, “You’re getting warmer. Now say that’s what’s in the oven out loud.”

I obeyed. “Okay, Cinnabon in the oven.”

She said, “Say it again.”

So I said it again: “Cinnabon in the oven.”

She said, “Again! Say it three times in a row real fast!”

So I said: “Cinnabon in the oven, Cinnabon in the oven, Cinnabon in the oven. Cinna...BUN IN THE OVEN?”

I stood there stunned for a second. Dawn looked at me and said, “Surprise! We have a bun in the oven!”

So on November 29, 2013, at 1:18 a.m., I learned that my surprise was that we had a bun in the oven, our daughter, Ava! It took me a few minutes to clear my head. Dawn and I both hugged and cried, and I think I ate all six of the cinnamon rolls, I mean buns, by myself.

On July 9, 2014, we welcomed our cinnamon bun Miss Ava Bluni into the world—and it has never been the same since. She certainly was (and is) a “little thing.” I started to think to myself, during many of those late nights of no sleep and trying to soothe this tiny newborn, that “the little things” can really make quite an impact. Isn’t it amazing how such a small thing can have so much power? Power to make you laugh. To make you cry. To make you feel love in ways you never imagined!
Many of us assume that our “big choices” and “big decisions” contribute most to our successes in life. We often believe that where we live or go to school, if we marry or who we marry, or where we decide to work make us who we are. They do. And they don’t. What I mean is, when we exclusively focus on only the “big things,” we fail to see that we are jumping the gun. I think it is more true that the little choices, plans, and steps we take in any given moment are really the fuel of our success. Think about it:

• How often has a happenstance, off-the-cuff conversation—one you never saw coming—completely changed your life?
• Looking back on your life, can you recall small moments and decisions that might have saved your life?
• Have you ever noticed that who you spend time with or who you have lunch with can have a huge impact on your attitude or outlook?
• Did you ever spend literally months in school working on a project, a BIG project, and now years later can barely recall what it was about or even what you learned? Yet, can you recall a short book you just happened to come across (maybe you read it in a single day!) that caused your mind and eyes to open to things that forever changed you?

Like I said, little things can be powerful. (Like Ava’s lungs at 3:00 a.m.!

Think about the old adage “A journey of a thousand miles begins with one small step.” You can look at the map before you embark on a trip and easily dismiss the squiggly line between Point A and Point B. After all, your destination is really what traveling is all about, right?
But it isn’t. Each individual step along the way, from the first to the last, makes your journey what it is.

When we focus solely on the final destination and the great distance still ahead of us, we lose the ability to appreciate the present moment and have a meaningful impact within it. We also fail to consider how seemingly minor decisions can set the tone for the rest of the trip.

That’s also how it is in your life and in your work. It sure has been in mine. Sometimes a “great” day or a “bad” day can’t be attributed to some big complicated process that went wrong. More often than not, it comes down to stuff like having gotten one more or one less hour of sleep the night before or who you went to lunch with during break—did they make you laugh or drag you down with complaints?

You can absolutely apply my “little things” theory to being inspired, too. If you want to push back against that concept, I’d challenge you with this: If you feel it is the “big things” that truly define your landscape, remember that each big thing is comprised of…wait for it…a lot of little things. The tallest brick wall is still made up of bricks. And even then, each brick is comprised of smaller compressed pebbles, stones, and grains of sand! If the composition of each brick is ignored, the quality of the brick will be lessened, and so will the strength of the structure.

Likewise, the longest and most complicated piece of music is made up of single notes, each one interweaving with the others to create a great symphony. It is not written and played all at once as some giant single noise.
A masterpiece is not painted in one giant swipe across the canvas, either. It starts with the master dipping her brush into the paint (a brush that’s made up of many tiny, individual hairs) and applying that first drop of paint to the canvas. With each stroke and each change of color, the work of art is eventually born.

So that’s you. You’re an inspiring masterpiece. Your work and, for that matter, your life can and should be a masterpiece of the highest degree. Priceless!

But when it comes to your profession, maybe you, like me, have often felt more like a stick-figure pencil sketch rather than a museum-worthy portrait. That’s okay. It’s all good. The best thing about pencil sketches is they are easily erased. So let’s get started.

1. **Do one little thing to pamper yourself today.** You may have noticed that we nurses put others’ care ahead of our own. It’s literally our job description. You may also have noticed that this “me-last” attitude tends to seep into all other areas of our lives. Even when we are off the clock, it’s hard to focus on ourselves when there are so many other items on our to-do lists, and so many “big” tasks that need to be accomplished. The idea of doing even one thing for “me, myself, and I” is totally foreign.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it (and I hope you do!), is to shift your thinking toward taking better care of yourself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. As we’ve discussed, even small changes can have a big impact. I’m asking you to be selfish for just a “little” bit of time each day. You and all those you care for will benefit from it.
So today, do one (that’s right, kids, JUST ONE) thing to take care of yourself. Let me give you some starting points. Today you can:

- Say one prayer.
- Meditate for one sitting of five minutes.
- Take one vitamin.
- Eat one serving of fresh organic fruit or vegetables.
- Listen to one song that makes you smile.
- Call one friend and tell them you love them.
- Order one book you’ve been dying to read.
- If your budget allows, buy one “little thing” that makes you smile.
- Donate to one charity online during a break.
- Sign up for one class toward your degree.
- On the way home from work, buy one treat for your significant other or dog/cat/parrot/horse and tell them how sweet you are on them. (I can personally recommend cinnamon rolls and Skittles.)

Don’t read on until you’ve done one of these things or something similar. Seriously.

Wow! Done already? You inspired nurse, you! Okay then, let’s move on.

2. **Spend a little time thinking about who lifts you up and who brings you down.** Think about who you spend your time with when you are not on a shift or at home with your family. Your friends, right? Or as some of us have unfortunately experienced, your “friends.” You know what I mean.
Time is precious. This life is precious. Your two most valuable and special resources are your love…and your time. So who do you “spend” those two on in your world of friends? Who do you go to lunch or take a break with at work? Who do you side with in discussions or debates? Who is the Robin to your Batman? The Tigger to your Pooh? The Laverne to your Shirley, the Starsky to your Hutch? (Too much?)

Once you have that list, review your friendships. Meditate on them. Go deep inside yourself and truly analyze the relationship. Does each person support you? You them? Do they act toward others in ways that are kind and compassionate? Do they focus on the good or the bad? Do they gossip? Are they in conflict with a lot of people? Do they make you feel better about yourself? Do they forgive you when you mess up? If you ever had an argument or disagreement with them, did they let it go or hold a grudge? Are you yourself with them or do you sometimes feel like you’re walking on eggshells?

I have learned from my talks with my teenage son and also through my own life experiences that we are greatly impacted and influenced by who we spend time with. If you have raised, are raising, or just act like a teenager yourself (you know who you are!), you know what I mean. Who you hang out with in any given moment is a little thing, but it can make or break you. There are people who lift us up, and there are people who bring us down. Who you walk to your car with at the end of the day, who you vent to when things are tough, who you share coffee with, or who you switch to a different weekend shift for—those seemingly “little things” can make a big impact on your attitude and well-being.
Once you have truly evaluated your “peeps,” decide as a grown and intelligent person what YOU think your next steps are. We both know there are only a few potential choices: Leave the friendship as it is. Work on it. Or walk away. What is your intuition telling you? You’re pretty smart, so I am 100 percent sure you know what’s best.

As I write these words, I can brag that I now have some of the most amazing friends ever. But I confess, I have been fooled in the past—and I pride myself on being really good at reading people. So here’s my best parting advice: As Maya Angelou once said, “When someone shows you who they are…believe them.”

3. Set a little goal for yourself—then take a little step toward achieving it. What do you want to accomplish in life? What do you hope to achieve as a nurse? What are your personal and professional goals? Normally, we are supposed to think BIG in this area! “Go big or go home!” “Set big goals!” You’ve heard it all before—and yes, there’s a lot of merit in the notion that you should never sell yourself short.

But for many people, setting big goals becomes a depressing exercise in futility. For example, they resolve to a) lose 100 pounds, b) make $100,000 a year, and c) get their PhD. But several weeks, months, or even years later, they still are eating cookies for breakfast, are working at the same job with the same pay, and haven’t even applied to school. Why? Getting from where they are now to where they want to be is too darn overwhelming. These “big dreamers” have no idea how to start achieving their big goals. They’ve never thought about all of the little steps they’ll have to take to change their lives.

That’s why I’m encouraging you to stop beating yourself up over all the big goals you haven’t achieved yet, and start setting some little
goals instead. Right now I want you to list one thing, one little thing, you can do today to advance toward a goal. Want to lose weight? How about we take it three pounds at a time? Choose an apple instead of a brownie on your next break. Want to save some money? Look for ways to spend just one dollar less every day. Want to get in shape? Do a five-minute workout by walking in place, doing a few pushups, and curling yourself into a few crunches right now.

If you’re reading this book alone, see if you can find someone to do this “little goal” exercise with you. Encouragement and accountability are “little” things that can make a world of difference in whether or not you succeed! If you’re reading this book with a group or department, then—lucky you!—you have a support team built in.

As you start making progress toward achieving the one little goal you’ve chosen, you’ll probably find that your overall motivation to make positive changes increases. Goals are like potato chips...you can’t have just one! To use a different metaphor, consider that a forest has never been planted all at once. It began with a single acorn, which grew into a tree. That tree made more acorns, which fell to the ground and grew into more trees. Each of those trees carried on the cycle, until the “goal” of creating a forest was reached. But it started as a little thing. It always does.

Don’t forget: The little things often have the most power to change your life, open your heart, and leave you inspired!
A force in healthcare cultural excellence, Rich Bluni, RN, is a wildly popular speaker and author. His award-winning first book, *Inspired Nurse*, has been read and loved by nurses across the globe, followed by *Oh No…Not More of That Fluffy Stuff!*, which put employee engagement on the to-do list of healthcare executives. Using social media as a platform to communicate with his followers and fans, his #MyInspiredSign challenge went viral and is still actively participated in by healthcare professionals.

Rich joined Studer Group® in 2007 as an expert coach working with organizations all over the U.S. A Registered Nurse and Licensed Healthcare Risk Manager, his clinical experience includes over 24 years in Pediatric Oncology, Pediatric Intensive Care, Flight Nursing, Trauma Intensive Care, Quality and Risk Management, and Emergency Department Leadership. He is one of Studer Group’s most sought-after keynote speakers for major healthcare conferences and has presented to tens of thousands of healthcare leaders, executives, and frontline staff at hundreds of healthcare organizations, hospitals, and medical practices in the United States and Canada.
Rich is married to the love of his life, Dawn, who is also a Registered Nurse, and has two sons and a daughter, Rhett, Luke, and Ava, who keep him inspired and make him smile every day.
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Nurses, Isn’t It Time to Care for Yourself the Way You Care for Others?

The follow-up to Rich Bluni, RN’s, bestseller and award-winning Inspired Nurse almost had to be written. The author speaks in front of tens of thousands of nurses every year at conferences and healthcare organizations. He shares his stories, listens to theirs, and constantly fields the question, “So, when’s the next book coming out?”

Finally, here it is! Inspired Nurse Too will make you laugh, cry, reconnect to your sense of meaning and purpose, and remember to be grateful for the incredible work you do every day. Most of all, it will help you sustain the energy and passion you need to provide the extraordinary care your patients need, expect, and deserve.

Besides the stories that touch your heart and make you nod your head in recognition, this book is packed with action steps to help you stay engaged, committed, and inspired as you continue on this amazing journey called nursing.

Nurses are the most giving people on earth. You constantly “pour out” yourself to other people, your teams, organizations, and communities. Inspired Nurse Too will help you replenish your spirit so you can continue to fulfill your purpose—to care for, teach, and lead those who depend on you.

Rich Bluni, RN, is an internationally renowned speaker and author of the best-selling books Inspired Nurse and Oh No... Not More of That Fluffy Stuff! With over 20 years of clinical experience in areas such as Pediatric and Trauma Intensive Care, Rich has a gift for understanding the challenges healthcare professionals face. A highly sought-after keynote speaker for large national healthcare conferences, associations, and hospitals, Rich has presented for tens of thousands in healthcare all over North America.