



# Small Things Considered: Why There Is No Perfect Design

*Henry Petroski*

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## **Small Things Considered: Why There Is No Perfect Design** Henry Petroski

Why has the durable paper shopping bag been largely replaced by its flimsy plastic counterpart? What circuitous chain of improvements led to such innovations as the automobile cup holder and the swiveling vegetable peeler? With the same relentless curiosity and lucid, witty prose he brought to his earlier books, Henry Petroski looks at some of our most familiar objects and reveals that they are, in fact, works in progress. For there can never be an end to the quest for the perfect design.

To illustrate his thesis, Petroski tells the story of the paper drinking cup, which owes its popularity to the discovery that water glasses could carry germs. He pays tribute to the little plastic tripod that keeps pizza from sticking to the box and analyzes the numerical layouts of telephones and handheld calculators. **Small Things Considered** is Petroski at his most trenchant and provocative, casting his eye not only on everyday artifacts but on their users as well.

*From the Trade Paperback edition.*

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