

EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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The 5 Second Rule

THE NUTSHELL

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You are about to learn something remarkable. It takes just five seconds to change your life. Sounds like a gimmick, doesn't it? It's not. It's science. I'll prove it to you. You change your life one five-second decision at a time. In fact, it's the only way you change.

As I used the Rule more and more in my life, I realized that I was making small decisions all day long that held me back. In five seconds flat, I'd decide to stay quiet, to wait, and not to risk it. I'd have an instinct to act and within five seconds my mind would kill it with doubt, excuses, worry, or fear. I was the problem and in five seconds, could push myself and become the solution. The secret to change had been right in front of my face the entire time. The solution was five second decisions.

This all started in 2009. I was 41 years old and facing some major problems with money, work, and in my marriage. As soon as I woke up each morning, all I felt was dread. Then one night, everything changed. I was about to turn off the TV and head to bed when a television commercial caught my attention. There on the screen was the image of a rocket launching. I could hear the famous final five-second countdown, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1, fire and smoke filled the screen, and the shuttle launched.

I thought to myself, "That's it, I'll launch myself out of bed tomorrow...like a rocket. I'll move so fast I won't have time to talk myself out of it." It was just an instinct and one that I could have easily dismissed. Luckily, I didn't. I acted on it. The important

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point in my story is that this instinct to launch myself out of bed was my inner wisdom talking. Hearing it was a tipping point. Following its instructions was life-changing. Your brain and your body send you signals to wake up and to pay attention. This idea of launching myself out of bed is an example of that. Your instincts may seem stupid in the moment, but when you honor them with deliberate action, it can change your life.

The next morning the alarm rang at 6 am and the first thing I felt was dread. It was dark. It was cold. It was winter in Boston and I did not want to wake up. I thought about the rocket launch and I immediately felt like it was stupid. Then, I did something that I had never done before. I ignored how I felt. I didn't think. I did what needed to be done. Instead of hitting the snooze button, I started counting. Backwards. 5...4...3...2...1...and then I stood up. That was the exact moment I discovered the #5SecondRule.

I used the Rule the next morning, and it worked again. Then a funny thing happened: I started to see five-second moments all day long, just like my struggle to wake up on time. If I stopped to think about what I knew I needed to do, I was toast. It took less than five seconds for excuses to flood my mind and for my own brain to stop me.

As you use the Rule, you'll see it too. There is a five-second window between your initial instinct to act and your brain stopping you. Seeing the five-second window changed everything for me. The problem was very clear. It was me. I was holding myself back, five seconds at a time. So I made myself a simple promise: if I knew that I should do something that could change me for the better, then I would use the Rule to push myself to do it, regardless of how I felt. I started using the Rule to force myself to not only get up early, but also to get to the gym, look for a job, drink less, and be a better parent and wife.

What I discovered is powerful: that pushing yourself to take simple actions creates a chain reaction in your confidence and your productivity. By pushing yourself to take the simple steps of moving your life forward, you create momentum and experience a sense of freedom and power that's hard to describe. The Rule is an example of some powerful and proven principles in modern psychology: a bias toward action, internal locus of control, behavioral flexibility, the progress principle, starting rituals, the Golden Rule of Habits, authentic pride, deliberate action, "If-Then planning," and activation energy.

The #5SecondRule actually only works on one thing—and that is you. You stop yourself from changing the exact same way every single time. You hesitate, then you over think and lock yourself in mental jail. That moment of hesitation is a killer. Hesitation sends a stress signal to your brain. It's a red flag that signals something's wrong and your brain goes into protection mode. This is how we are wired to fail.

That moment of hesitation can also be used to your advantage. Every time you catch yourself hesitating, it is a push moment! The five-second window is opened and it is time to 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 push yourself forward and be bigger than your excuses. Seeing the 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 countdown can serve as a vivid reminder of the Rule and its importance. If you master the Rule you will reprogram your mind. You will teach yourself new behavior patterns. Instead of defaulting to worry, hesitation, and fear, you will find yourself automatically acting with courage. Overtime, as you take more and more steps forward, you'll discover real confidence and pride in yourself that comes when you honor your goals and accomplish small wins that are important to you.

The fastest way to implement the #5SecondRule is to start by using it the exact same way I did. Here's a simple Wake Up Challenge that you can do tomorrow morning to jumpstart your use of the Rule. Just set your alarm 30 minutes earlier than usual, and the moment it rings count 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 to push yourself out of bed.

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Yes, you can move mountains. Whatever is happening right now, this it. This is your life and it's not going to begin again. You can't change the past, but in five seconds you can change your future. That's the power of everyday courage. When your heart speaks, honor it, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1- and move. One moment of courage can change your day. One day can change your life. And your life can change the world. There is greatness in you. The time to reveal it is now.

5...4...3...2...1...GO!