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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mel Robbins

Mel Robbins is a vlogger, serial entrepreneur, author, award-winning CNN Legal Analyst and Contributing Editor to SUCCESS Magazine.

The 5 Second Rule

THE SUMMARY

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PART ONE: THE 5 SECOND RULE

Chapter 1: Five Seconds to Change Your Life

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.

This is the true story of the 5 Second Rule: what it is, why it works, and how it has transformed the lives of people around the world. The Rule is easy to learn and its impact is profound. It's the secret to changing anything. Once you learn the Rule, you can start using it immediately. The Rule will help you live, love, work, and speak with greater confidence and courage every day. Use it once and it'll be there for you whenever you need it.

Using the Rule, I replaced my tendency to over-think the smallest moves with a bias toward action. I used the Rule to master self-monitoring and become more present and productive. The Rule taught me how to stop doubting and start believing in myself, my ideas, and my abilities. Most of all, the Rule has given me the inner strength to become a better and much happier person, not for others, but for me.

After using the Rule for more than seven years, and hearing from people all over the world, I've come to realize that every single day we face moments that are

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difficult, uncertain, and scary. Life requires courage, and what the Rule will help you discover is the courage to become your greatest self. 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 just five seconds, I could push myself and become the solution. The secret to change had been right in front of my face the entire time and that solution is five-second decisions.

Doing the work to improve your life is simple, you can do it, and it's work you want to do because it's the most important work there is. It is the work of learning how to love and trust yourself enough to stop waiting and to start leaning into all the magic, opportunity, and joy that your life, work, and relationships have to offer.

Chapter 2: How I Discovered the 5 Second Rule

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. Have you ever felt that way? It's the worst. The alarm rings, and you just don't feel like getting up and facing the day or you lie awake at night with your head spinning as you worry about all of your problems.

That was me. For months, I felt so overwhelmed by the problems I had that I could barely get out of bed. When the alarm rang at 6 a.m. I would lie there and think about the day ahead, the lien on the house, the negative account balance, my failed career, and how much I resented my husband. Then I would hit the snooze button not once, but over and over again.

The reason that I didn't get out of bed was simple: I just didn't feel like it. I would later learn that I was stuck in what researchers call a "habit loop." I had hit the snooze button so many mornings in a row the behavior was now a closed-loop pattern encoded in my brain.

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, but I didn't. I acted on it.

The fact is I wanted to solve our problems. I didn't want to destroy my marriage or keep feeling like the world's worst mom. I wanted to be financially secure. I wanted to feel happy and proud of myself again. The important 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.

There's more to this point about acting on your instincts than just the phrase "trust your gut." New research from the University of Arizona, in partnership with Cornell and Duke, has shown that there's a powerful connection between your brain and your instinct to act. When you set a goal, your brain opens up a task list. Whenever you are near things that can help you achieve those goals, your brain fires up your instincts to signal to get that goal completed.

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When it comes to goals, dreams, and changing your life, your inner wisdom is a genius. Your goal-related impulses, urges, and instincts are there to guide you. You need to learn to bet on them. History proves you'll never know when your greatest inspiration will strike and where that discovery will lead you if you trust yourself enough to act on it.

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... Then I stood up and I point to that as the exact moment I discovered the #5SecondRule.

Chapter 3: What You Can Expect When You Use It

When I used the Rule that first morning, I was as surprised as you are that something that stupid worked. Counting backwards? 5- 4- 3- 2- 1...seriously? I didn't know why it worked. I just knew it did. I had struggled for months to wake up on time and suddenly the #5SecondRule made changing my behavior simple. Later I would learn that when you count backwards, you mentally shift the gears in your mind. You interrupt your default thinking and do what psychologists call "assert control." The counting distracts you from your excuses and focuses your mind on moving in a new direction. When you physically move instead of stopping to think, your physiology changes and your mind falls in line.

In researching this book, I discovered that the Rule is (in the language of habit research) a "starting ritual" that activates the prefrontal cortex, helping to change your behavior. 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. 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.

There's an important concept in psychology put forth by Julian Rotter in 1954. It's called "locus of control." The more that you believe that you are in control of your life, including your actions and your future, the happier and more successful you'll be. There's one thing that is guaranteed to increase your feelings of control over your life and that is a bias toward action. Forget motivation because it's a myth. I don't know when we all bought into the idea that in order to change you must "feel" eager or "feel" motivated to act. It's complete garbage. The moment it's time to assert yourself, you will not feel motivated. In fact, you won't feel like doing anything at all. If you want to improve your life, you'll need to get off your rear end and kick your own butt. In my world, I call that the power of a push.

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Right before we're about to do something that feels difficult, scary or uncertain, we hesitate. Hesitation is the kiss of death. You might hesitate for a just nano-second, but that's all it takes. That one small hesitation triggers a mental system that's designed to stop you. It happens in less than five seconds. Ever notice how fast fear and self-doubt take over your head and you start making up excuses for why you shouldn't say something or do something? We hold ourselves back in the smallest, most mundane moments every day, and that impacts everything. If you break this habit of hesitating and you find the courage to "take some kind of action," you'll be astonished by how fast your life changes.

You see, it's not the big moves that define our lives; it's the smallest ones. Within five seconds of stopping to think, you'll have decided not to take any action on those small things. Over time, those small decisions build and the kicker is that we've repeated this pattern of hesitating, worrying, and doubting ourselves so much, that these actions are now habits that have encoded in our brains.

The Rule will work every time you use it, but you have to use it. It is a tool. If you stop using it, fear and uncertainty will creep back in and take control of your decisions. If that happens, just start using the Rule again. As you use the Rule over time, you'll experience a shift inside yourself that is much deeper, a transformation that impacts confidence and inner strength. You will come face to face with the excuses, habits, feelings, insecurities, and fears that have haunted you for years. You will see the bullshit you put yourself through every day and how much precious time you waste waiting for things to change. By using the Rule, that waiting will end. You will be absolutely amazed by how much joy and freedom you feel by making five-second decisions.

Chapter 4: Why the Rule Works

The Rule works because it is so simple. Some of my most favorite researchers, professors, and thinkers have written bestsellers and delivered epic TED Talks detailing how our own minds betray us with a seemingly endless list of tricks including cognitive biases, the paradox of choice, the psychological immune system, and the spotlight effect. What all these great researchers have taught me is that the moment you want to change, break a habit, or do something hard or scary, your brain goes to work to stop you.

Basically, your mind tricks you into thinking things through. The moment you get tricked into doing this, you'll get trapped by your thoughts. Your mind has a million ways to talk you out of acting. That's the neurological reason why it's so hard to change. Change requires you to do things that are uncertain, scary, or new. Your brain, by design, will not let you do such things. Your brain is afraid of things that feel uncertain, scary, or new, so it will do whatever it can to talk you out of doing those things. It is part of your hard-wiring, and this hesitation happens really fast. That is why you have to act even faster to beat it.

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: you. You stop yourself from changing the exact same way every single time you hesitate. Then you over-think and you 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 so your brain goes into protection mode. This is how we are wired to fail. Think about this for a minute.

You don't hesitate all the time. For example, you don't hesitate when you pour a cup of coffee in the morning. You don't hesitate when you put on your jeans. You don't hesitate when you turn on the television. You don't hesitate to call your

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best friend. You don't think at all. You just have the instinct to call your friend, and you pick up the phone, and you call them. But when you hesitate just before making a sales call or texting someone back, it makes your brain think that something must be wrong. The longer you think about that sales call, the less likely you'll make it. Most of us don't even realize how often we hesitate because we've done it so often that it's become a habit.

But what you will soon learn is 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 to 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. Over time, as you take more and more steps forward, you'll discover something else. You'll discover the authentic kind of pride that comes when you honor your goals and accomplish small wins that are important to you.

PART TWO: THAT POWER OF COURAGE

Chapter 5: Everyday Courage

As I mentioned before, everyday life is full of moments that are scary, uncertain, and difficult. Facing these moments and unlocking the opportunity, magic, and joy in your life requires tremendous courage. Courage is, in fact, what I needed to get out of bed. It was scary to get out of bed because it meant facing my problems. It was difficult to look myself in the mirror and accept the fact that I was 41 years old and my life and career were in pretty lousy shape. It was overwhelming to consider I might not be able to fix the situation my husband and I were in.

Courage is what my daughter needs to put down the pen in her high school history class and raise her hand. It's what your team needs to articulate its concerns to you and it's what your kids need to tell you what's really going on. Putting your online profile up on a dating site or blocking your ex on your phone can feel like an act of bravery. So can adopting new technology for your business or walking in the door of your home and facing your problems head-on instead of pouring a drink and zoning out in front of the TV.

Courage is a push. The kind of push we give ourselves when we stand up, speak up, show up, go first, raise our hand or do whatever feels hard, scary, or uncertain. Do not look at our heroes in history, business, art, and music and assume that somehow they are different than you. It's not true. Courage is a birthright. It is inside each and every one of us. You were born with it and you can tap into it anytime you want. It's not a matter of confidence, education, status, personality, or profession. It's simply a matter of knowing how to find it when you need it. You'll probably be alone when you need it.

It's going to be just you, sitting in a meeting at work, standing in your kitchen, riding the subway, looking at your phone, staring at your computer, or thinking about something. All of sudden, it will happen. Something will go down, and your instincts will come alive. Your values and your instincts will tell you what you should do, and your feelings will scream "NO." That is the push moment. You don't have to have all the answers. You just have to make a decision in the next five seconds. When you push yourself, you may not change the world, but I can guarantee you'll change something equally as important. You'll change yourself.

Chapter 6: What are You Waiting For?

We waste so much of our lives waiting for the right time to have the conversation, ask for the raise, bring it up, or start

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things. It reminds me of that famous Wayne Gretzky quote: “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” Here’s the thing—you never regret the shots you do take but you always regret holding back.

You’ll never stop yourself from starting to worry about something. But you can stop yourself from letting those worries drag you into a parade of worries that take control of your mind. You can assert yourself and push yourself to think about something empowering. You can step back into the present moment and go for what you want, and you can do it in five seconds flat.

We are all guilty of thinking about getting involved but not doing it. We’re all waiting “for the right time.” It’s total stupidity. In a recent survey, 85% of professional services employees admitted they were withholding critical feedback from their bosses. Why? They’re waiting for the “right time.” The same is true for your kids, your spouse, your friends, and your colleagues. All human beings are wired this way. One of the most insightful and enlightening aspects of Adam Grant’s incredible book *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* is when he describes how some of our greatest heroes are just like us in this simple regard: they hesitated, doubted themselves, and almost missed the opportunities of their lifetimes because they didn’t feel ready. I find it reassuring to know that the people we admire most needed to be pushed through their fears, excuses, and feelings, just like you and me.

The difference between people who make their dreams come true and those of us who don’t is the courage to start and the discipline to keep going. The Rule is a game-changer because it 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 forces you to get out of your head and start and it’ll 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 help you keep going. Waiting won’t help. Waiting will only make it worse. When you sit with fear and uncertainty your mind makes it expand. This is called “the spot-light effect” and it’s one of the many tricks your brain plays in an attempt to keep you “safe.”

When you 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 push yourself forward you’ll discover the magic in your life and you open yourself up to the world, to opportunity, and to possibility. You might not get the girl, the part, or the response you wanted but that’s not the point. In the end, you’ll get something way cooler because you’ll discover the power inside of you.

Chapter 7: You’ll Never Feel Like It

If you’ve ever wondered why it’s so hard to make yourself do the things that you know will solve your problems and improve your life, the answer is simple. It’s your feelings. None of us realize it, but we make almost every single decision not with logic, not with our hearts, not based on our goals and dreams, but with our feelings. Unfortunately, our feelings in the moment are almost never aligned with what’s best for us. Study after study shows that we opt for what feels good now or feels easier rather than doing the things that we know in our hearts will make us better in the long run. The moment that you realize your feelings are the problem, you will have the ability to beat them.

When you stop to consider how you feel, you stop moving toward your goal. Once you hesitate, you’ll start thinking about what you need to do, you’ll weigh the pros and cons, you’ll consider how you feel about what you need to do, and you’ll talk yourself out of doing it.

You can’t control how you feel, but you can control how you act. Ever wonder how pro athletes achieve so much? Part of it is talent and practice, but another key element is a skill that you and I need in our lives and that’s the ability to separate from our emotions and push our bodies and mouths to move. They may feel tired as the football game drags into the fourth quarter, but they don’t act tired. Feelings are merely suggestions, ones the greatest athletes and teams ignore. To change, you must do the same. You must ignore how you feel, and as Nike would tell you, *Just Do It* anyway.

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Confidence is a skill that you build through action. Social psychologist Timothy Wilson writes about a psychological intervention, *“Do good, be good,”* that dates to Aristotle. Its premise is based on changing people’s behavior first, which in turn changes their self-perception of the kind of person that they are based on the kinds of things that they do.

This is precisely why the #5SecondRule is your ally. It is a tool for action and for behavior change aligned with your goals and commitments. It is not a tool for thinking, and at the end of the day, you are going to need to do more than think if you want to change your life. Wilson clearly agrees. He has said that, “our minds aren’t stupid. It’s not like you can just tell your mind, ‘Think Positively.’ You’ve got to nudge it a little more along.” I believe you must do more than nudge. You must push right through the feelings that stop you and do the work to break the habits that hold you back. Then, you need to replace each and every one of these destructive habits with a habit of courage.

You can feel like a “scaredy cat,” but 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 act brave. At the heart of everyday courage is a choice. Five seconds at a time you make a decision to do, say, or pursue what’s truly important to you. That’s why there’s such a tight bond between courage and confidence. Every time you face doubt and 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 right past it, you prove to yourself that you are capable. Every time that you beat fear and 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 do it anyway, you display inner strength. Every time you smash your excuses and 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 say it, you honor the greatness inside of you that wants to be heard. Confidence grows one small, courageous move at a time.

Chapter 8: How to Start Using the Rule

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 push yourself out of bed. There are a few reasons why this challenge is important. First, there’s no wiggle room. The challenge is straightforward. It’s just you, the alarm clock, and 5- 4- 3- 2- 1. If you fail, it’s because you made a decision to blow off the #5SecondRule.

Second, if you can change your morning routine, you can change anything. Change requires you to act deliberately, despite how you feel. If you can master that in one area of your life, you can do it in any area that you are trying to improve.

Third, I want you to experience a concept called “activation energy” and feel how hard it really is to push yourself to do simple things. In chemistry, “activation energy” is the minimum amount of energy required to begin a chemical reaction. Chemists have found that this initial amount of energy is much higher than the average amount of energy needed to keep the reaction going. What does that have to do with getting up? A lot. The initial amount of energy to push yourself out of bed is much higher than the energy you exert once you’re up and moving. That first bout of activation energy is very uncomfortable but I want you to feel that resistance so you learn what it’s like to push yourself. If you don’t get that huge push (like you did as a kid when your mother turned off the TV and said, “It’s a beautiful day, get outside and go do something.”) your brain will inevitably take you down the path of doing nothing.

When you start to count 5- 4- 3- 2- 1, it is the beginning of a chain reaction that not only awakens the prefrontal cortex, but also gets you ready to make that physical “initial huge push” that’s required to change. When you get up the moment that alarm rings, it gives you personal power. This one small act of getting up when the alarm rings demonstrates that you have the inner strength to do what needs to be done. Plus, it will give you a much more positive outlook on the day.

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PART THREE: COURAGE CHANGES YOUR BEHAVIOR

Chapter 9: Improve Your Health

Why is getting healthy so hard? The answer is your feelings. If you feel deprived of bread, you won't stick to your gluten-free diet. The second you consider how you feel about eating salad for the next 113 days, you'll convince yourself not to do it. The moment you scan today's CrossFit workout and consider how you feel about doing three sets of 45 burpees with a bunch of people in a parking lot, you won't feel like walking out the door and going.

Blowing off the gym, hitting the In-n-Out Burger drive-thru, and wasting time on Facebook is a hell of a lot easier than hyperventilating in a spin class or cutting out sugar from your diet. If you want to lose weight, follow a diet, and regularly exercise, the one thing you must do is stop thinking about how you feel. Your feelings don't matter. The only thing that matters is what you DO.

Here's how you use the Rule:

5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO and get to the gym.

5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO and put down the donut and eat a grilled chicken breast.

5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO and walk away from the bakery even though the bread and desserts are seducing you like a siren.

Life is about the choices we make. I have said over and over in this book that you can always choose how you act. If you have goals to get healthier, what you need to do is usually straightforward. Pick a plan to follow, any plan will do, and then 5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO. The only thing you will need to choose after that is choosing each and every day to DO IT even though you really, really, really don't feel like it. Exercise and health comes down to one simple rule: you don't have to feel like it. You just have to do it.

Chapter 10: Increase Productivity

If your household is anything like ours, it's chaos most mornings. That's why I had to get serious about my mornings if I planned to be the boss of my day, and it started with getting up earlier so that I had time to focus on my big picture goals before the day hijacked me. Here's how I changed my routine to become a master at focusing on my priorities:

1) *I get up when the alarm rings.* You know that getting a good night's sleep is important for productivity. But I bet you didn't know that how you wake up is just as important as how you sleep. Scientists have recently discovered that when you hit the snooze button it has a negative impact on brain function and productivity that can last up to four hours!

We sleep in cycles that take about 90 to 110 minutes to complete. About two hours before you wake up, these sleep cycles end and your body starts to slowly prepare to wake up. When your alarm rings, your body is in wakeup mode. If you hit the snooze button and drift back to sleep, you force your brain to start a new sleep cycle that is 90 to 110 minutes long. When the "snooze" alarm goes off 15 minutes later, the cortical region of your brain, which is the part of the brain responsible for decision-making, attention, alertness, and self-control, is still in the sleep cycle. It won't be able to snap awake because it needs 75 more minutes to finish what that snooze button started.

It can take up to four hours for this "sleep inertia" condition to wear off and for your cognitive functions to return to their full capacity. That's why you feel so darn groggy when you get up after hitting the snooze. It's not because you didn't

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get enough sleep. It's because you hit the snooze button, you started a new sleep cycle and then interrupted it. On days when you hit the snooze button, there's no way you're at your best

2) *I walk to the bathroom and turn off the alarm.* My husband and I do not have our phones or alarm clocks in our bedroom or on our nightstands. Where is my phone? In the bathroom. Close enough so I can hear the phone ring if someone calls and the alarm ring in the morning. But, far enough so I don't fall to temptation. If my phone is on the nightstand, I will grab it without thinking and stay in bed reading emails. You know you're guilty of the same. If it's in reach, it's easy to grab without thinking. A majority of adults read emails before they get out of bed, and a recent study from Deloitte reports that one-third of adults and one-half of those under the age of 35 actually wake up and check their phones in the middle of the night. By putting my phone/ alarm in the bathroom, I'm making it harder to succumb to the habit of reaching for my phone, and I am setting myself up for a good night's sleep.

3) *I brush my teeth and focus on the day ahead.* I use the 3 to 5 minutes of time that I spend washing my face and brushing and flossing my teeth to focus my thoughts on what I really want and need to do for ME and MY big-picture goals. This is not a to-do list. This is a "must list." It's a moment when I consciously collect my thoughts and think of one or two things I might not feel like doing but that I must do today for my goals, dreams, and business growth. Researchers call these SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely). I just call them two things that will guarantee forward progress on things that matter to me.

4) *I get dressed, make my bed, walk into the kitchen, and pour a cup of coffee.* Have you noticed what I haven't done yet? I haven't looked at my phone or gone online to check email. Why? Because I know that the second I do, I will lose my focus. The moment you check email, read the news or surf social media, someone else's priorities jump in front of yours. Do you think that Bill Gates and Oprah are lying in bed scrolling through social feeds? Nope, and neither should you. You must put yourself first, so do not check email until you plan YOUR day.

5) *I write down my 1 to 3 "musts" and why they are important.* In my cheapo daily planner that I bought at an office supply store, I jot down the one, two, or three things that I feel I must do today that are for ME. There are a couple of reasons why this is an important step: one, because I am a visual person, and two, according to research by Dominican University of California psychology professor Dr. Gail Matthews, by simply writing down your goals, you are 42% more likely to achieve them.

If I put them in my electronic calendar, I'll forget about it. Half the time, I walk into a room and can't remember what I walked in for so I "stalk myself with my musts" by keeping them written down. When they are in my planner, which is something that I look at throughout the day, I'm cued visually. Seeing my "musts" reminds me to do these tasks. You can do this in a notebook, in your calendar, wherever, just write them down and keep them with you.

6) *I plan my day and take 30 before 7:30 a.m.* I plan and often execute the most important "musts" FIRST, before I check my phone or go online and check email. I do this using a tool I call "30 before 7:30 a.m." By setting up your day to make sure that you focus on the right things, you prime yourself to be much more productive and successful in accomplishing your goals for the day. The concept of "30 before 7:30 a.m." cannot be done once you walk into the office. You must do this at home or at your favorite coffee shop or on the train or sitting in your car in the parking lot. I'm not kidding. The moment you walk into your office and answer that first email or take that first call, your day is gone.

7) *I plan my quitting time.* Every day, when I start my day, I determine what time I will stop working and hang out with my family. Having a deadline for stopping or redirecting does two things. It makes me more intentional with the time I have

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and that makes me more productive. If I notice myself detouring from my routine or getting distracted, that's a moment of power. I use the Rule, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 to get back on track.

Chapter 11: End Procrastination

A common mistake we all make is thinking that people make a deliberate choice to procrastinate. In fact, most people who struggle with procrastination tell researchers that they feel like they have no control over it. They are right; because we don't understand the real reason why we procrastinate. We procrastinate because we feel stressed out. The catch is you aren't stressed about the work. You are stressed about the bigger stuff: money, relationship problems, or life in general. When you blow off work or studying for 15 minutes of online shopping or watching the highlights of last night's game, you are taking a mini stress-break from the bigger stress you feel overall.

It's like emotional eating for the mind. When you avoid something that feels hard, you get a sense of relief. Plus, when you do something you enjoy, like surfing Facebook or laughing at Viral Videos, you get a short-term boost of dopamine. The more often you procrastinate, the more likely you'll repeat the behavior. Here's the problem: While you get a small boost of relief when you watch cat videos, over time the work that you are avoiding builds and that creates more stress in your life.

Here's how you can most effectively use the #5SecondRule to beat procrastination: use it to make yourself start. Start small. Attack what you are avoiding for just 15 minutes at a time. Then, take a break and watch a few cat videos, and for crying out loud, give yourself a break for blowing things off until now. You're only human. All of this stuff is common sense. You eat the elephant (in the room) one bite at a time. Unless you beat the feelings that trigger your bad habits, and you push yourself to just get started, you'll never change.

PART FOUR: COURAGE CHANGES YOUR MIND

Chapter 12: Stop Worrying

You can stop worrying. The #5SecondRule will teach you how. Worrying is a default setting that your mind goes to when you aren't paying attention. The key is catching yourself when you drift into worry, and then regaining mental control by using the Rule. As soon as I catch myself worrying, I use the Rule, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 and I think of something more positive.

When you start to use the Rule to end worrying, you'll be amazed by how often your mind just drifts to something negative. Mine does it every day. It really sucks. Each day, I fight against it. There are some days I have to use the Rule a dozen or more times to control my thoughts. When your mind takes you somewhere sad, dark, doubtful or negative, you don't have to go with it.

Chapter 13: End Anxiety

I've spent countless hours with therapists who have told me and the kids to just "change the channel" and think about something else. That works if you are merely worried, but that strategy doesn't work for full-blown anxiety. There's a reason for that. When you feel anxious, you are in a state of physical agitation. When you tell a person to calm down, you are asking someone to go from 60 mph to 0 mph. It's like trying to stop a freight train by throwing a boulder in front of it; it'll jump the tracks.

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A study in the journal *Behavior Research and Therapy* showed that people who naturally try to suppress their unwanted thoughts end up being more distressed by said thoughts. That's right, when you try to tell yourself to just calm down, you make the anxiety worse because you are fighting against it! When you understand how panic works, what it is, and the role your brain has in making it worse, you can beat it.

There are two strategies that work incredibly well together. They are using the #5SecondRule to assert control over your mind and then reframing the anxiety as excitement so that your brain doesn't escalate it and your body can calm down. Here's how you do it. In a nutshell, since anxiety is a state of arousal, it's much easier to convince your brain that all those nervous feelings are just excitement rather than to try to calm yourself down. When using this technique in experiments ranging from singing karaoke to giving a speech on camera to taking a math test, participants who said, "I'm excited" did better in every single challenge than those participants who said, "I'm anxious." Reframing your nervous into enthusiasm works.

The catch about telling yourself "I'm excited" is that it doesn't actually lower the feelings surging through your body. It just gives your mind an explanation that empowers you. That way the nervous feelings do not escalate. You stay in control and the agitation in your body will start to calm down as you begin to move. The next time you have a panic attack while making coffee, experience stage fright, have pre-game jitters, or are worrying about a big exam or a job interview, use the #5SecondRule and this new research to beat your anxiety. As soon as you feel the anxiety take over your body, take control of your mind, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 just start telling yourself "I'm so excited" and push yourself to move forward.

Chapter 14: Beat Fear

I cured myself of my fear of flying, using the #5SecondRule and a specific form of anxiety reappraisal that I call "anchor thoughts." You can use the Rule the exact same way with any fear. The moment I notice something that makes me nervous, whether that be an alarming sound, turbulence, a climb that seems to be taking too long, weather that looks ominous, or a bad vibe from a passenger next to me, my fears can be easily triggered because my pattern of thinking is so ingrained. When this happens, I start to count 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 to flush the fear out of my head, activate my prefrontal cortex and pull myself into the present moment. Then, I force myself to anchor on the specific images of where I am flying to and I think to myself about how excited I am to walk on the beach with my mom, have dinner with a client in Chicago, or climb Table Top Mountain with my buddies.

These anchoring images are powerful reminders of a simple truth...if I am sitting in a restaurant in Chicago having dinner with my clients tonight, or walking the beach in Michigan tomorrow morning with my mom, or arriving home in time to make the girls' lacrosse game, obviously the plane didn't crash and I have nothing to worry about. Most important, I give my mind the context it is looking for so that it doesn't escalate the fear. As I think about the anchor thought, my body calms down.

I still use this technique when I face other fears. Before a negotiation or a difficult conversation, for example, I'll create an anchor thought of the conversation or the negotiation going really well. Specifically, I might picture someone hugging me or thanking me for "having the conversation" or toasting the deal with my business partner at our favorite bar. That thought keeps me grounded, present, and powerful. When you enter a conversation managing a fear, you can't be your best because part of your mind is busy trying to manage that fear in real time. When you have an anchor thought, it allows you to make the fear disappear the moment that you notice your mind drift to it. Remember, even though your fears and your habits can hijack you in five seconds, you can take back control just as quickly and continue to do so

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forever.

PART FIVE: COURAGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

Chapter 15: Building Real Confidence

Confidence builds when you do things that affirm your sense of self, particularly when they are things that you might not normally do, like getting up on time, speaking in front of your church, or chasing down the CEO of Cisco on a bike path. These are acts of everyday courage and they build confidence. The more that you practice acts of courage, the more that you will believe you are in control of your life, and as a result, the more confident that you will become. Even when what you need to do scares you to death, the Rule helps you take courageous action.

Stop focusing on the big things. Use 5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO on the smallest things and you will see that these moments are actually not so small. Daily courageous actions of getting out of bed, making tough decisions, being able to say no, giving back every chance you get, and focusing on priorities create a ripple effect that change your life. These are little steps but the payoff is everything that you seek: confidence, control, and a sense of pride that feels damn good.

Chapter 16: Pursuing Passion

Over the years, I've received lots of questions about how to find your passion and purpose. Not once have I ever been asked to help someone "think about their passion". That's because finding your passion is an active process and you'll find that the #5SecondRule is an incredible tool as opportunities start to appear. What stops people from finding their passion is that can't get out of their thoughts and move into action. When you use the #5SecondRule to 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 push yourself to start exploring and lean into opportunities as they appear, you'll be shocked where it leads.

How do you explore? Hire the best guide you can find which is curiosity. Your curiosity is how your instincts get you to pay attention to what your heart really cares about. If you can't stop thinking something, make something your new hobby. Also pay close attention to envy. If you find yourself jealous of someone else, explore that feeling. What aspect of their life are you jealous of? This may give you a clue into what you really want for yourself.

Next, push yourself to take simple steps to explore that subject. Read about it, watch video tutorials, talk to people, take a class, and write a plan. You'll be surprised by what happens over time. It will start as just an instinct. It always does. First you take a class. A class leads to a certification. A certification leads to conversations. Conversations lead to opportunities. Small opportunities lead to larger ones. Maybe you'll want to share something that you're learning with people at work, so you use the Rule to push yourself to do it. That's when momentum kicks in.

You'll curse me as things actually start to happen, but you'll thank yourself for finding the courage to trust your heart and explore what you find fascinating. The answers are inside of you if you have the courage to listen. You are like no other person. You have something remarkable to share with the world. It starts with listening to what's inside of you and ends with the courage to go where it leads. Follow it.

Chapter 17: Enrich Your Relationships

There are only two words of advice you need to improve any relationship.

"Say It." I was speaking at a sales meeting for a retail brokerage firm in Florida and afterward a tall man named Don

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approached me. He was in his late 50's, had a beard, and was wearing a sport coat over his madras shirt. He said he wanted to share something with me about "my 5 Second Rule." Don had "his own version of it that had changed his life." He had "made a decision a few years ago, that nothing important would be left unsaid."

Then he shared a story about how, acting on instinct, he pushed himself to share something with his daughter that had completely changed their entire relationship. Over the years his daughter Amber and her husband had taken in family members who had fallen on hard times. They also volunteered every weekend in their community and had completed several service trips. Don told them that he admired them. He admired how they lived their lives and the example that their lives provided the world. He added that he was so proud of the young woman Amber had become. Then he told me this: "Right before I was about to say it, I was so afraid. Imagine that. I was afraid to say something because I was afraid to get emotional."

He said that after that conversation, his relationship with his daughter was never the same again. They are now closer than he ever imagined and the experience inspired him to live by this rule: Leave nothing important unsaid. Intimacy takes courage. Risking getting emotional or upsetting someone so that you can express yourself is scary, but the result is magical. Leave nothing important unsaid. 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 go ahead and say it.

Conclusion: The Power of You

Today, something incredible is going to happen. A woman will quit her job because she truly hates it. She is scared, but she'll do it anyway. A man will call off his wedding, knowing he'll be hated for it. A 56-year-old veterinarian will start her first business, an app developer will launch her first product, and a 15-year-old will start writing his first cookbook. A banker will apply for an executive role that she's always wanted. A man in a bar will leave the safety of his friends to walk across the room to approach an attractive woman. Initially, he'll feel like he's dying inside, but it will turn out way better than he anticipated. They know they might fail or fall flat on their faces, but they do it anyway. They push themselves forward despite the feelings that scream "NO!" They feel afraid but they still move.

The question is, why? The answer is simple. They know the secret to greatness. When your heart speaks, honor it, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1- and move. They also know the alternative and that it is terrifying because it means missing out on all that you are meant to become. It means living on autopilot and swimming right past all the magic, opportunity, and joy that your life has to offer. The greatest risk of all is dying before you've actually pushed yourself to live.

Yes, you can move mountains. Whatever is happening right now, this is 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!