

# SUMMARY

## THE SECOND 5/RULE

Mel Robbins



# **Summary of «The 5-Second Rule» by Mel Robbins**

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The easy-to-follow guide to learning how to awaken your inner passions and become influential at work, step out of your comfort zone, and control your emotions to help with addictions and depression.



# QuickRead

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## Introduction

The five-second rule. What if I told you that your life could be changed from a 5-second decision? That would be crazy, right? But that's exactly what Mel Robbins proved throughout her book, *The Five-Second Rule*. With just five seconds, you can learn to live, love, work, and boost your confidence and courage.

While at a low point in life, Mel discovered she had invented a powerful metacognition tool that could change absolutely everything about a person's life. Since discovering the five-second rule, Mel has taken control of her life and improved cash flow, marriage, and career. Not only has she cured her anxiety, but she has also sold two businesses and has become one of the most-booked speakers in the world. She's never felt happier about the freedom and control in her life. Now, Mel wants to teach you her secrets to realizing your potential and awakening your inner courage and confidence.

## Discovering the 5-Second Rule and Why it Works!

In 2009, Mel Robbins was 41-years-old and struggling to find balance in her life, she wasn't making enough money and she was unhappy both in her career and in her marriage. She found herself struggling to get out of bed each morning and was stuck in a "habit-loop" where she would hit the snooze button so many times that the habit became a routine that encoded in her brain. Many mornings the school bus would leave without picking up the children, the kids would forget their lunches, backpacks, and permission slips as she rushed to drop them off at school. She was losing hope and her self-confidence was in a downward spiral.

However, she was watching a TV commercial one day with a rocket launching at the count of 5-4-3-2-1...at that moment Mel had an epiphany. She decided that the following morning she would "launch" herself out of bed moving so fast, that there would be no time to talk herself out of it. That next morning, she did just that, she counted back from five and launched herself out of bed just as she planned. She ignored the feelings of dread and stupidity and discovered at that moment a rule that would become her mantra and change her life.

So why does the 5-second rule work? Well, when you count backward, you mentally shift gears in your mind, interrupting your default thinking and "asserting control." It distracts the mind from excuses and changes your physiology, making your mind fall back in line. It becomes the "starting ritual" that activates the prefrontal cortex, helping you change behavior. The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain responsible for focus, change, and deliberate action.

Starting the 5-4-3-2-1 rule creates a pattern in your brain, that with continuous practice, will destroy the patterns of thinking like worrying, self-doubt, and fear. It will become a "starting ritual" that will replace your bad default patterns with new positive ones, thus reprogramming your mind! To change the pattern of a bad habit, you must replace it which is where the 5-second rule comes into play. Change your decisions. Change your life.

# The Power of Courage

Throughout history, we have seen people speak out about the injustices of the world. People like Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out about the inequalities he and the black community experienced, but how was he able to do this? How was he able to face his fear? He simply had a push. Now, you might not be looking to spark one of the greatest Civil rights Movements of all time, maybe you're just looking to get out of bed early in the morning or ask your boss for a raise, these all require one thing: courage.

First, we have the story of Rosa Parks who refused to give up her bus seat for a white passenger. At that moment, Rosa took a stand for herself, and her decision to not give up her seat was a small act that sparked the American Civil Rights Movement and teaches us that it is not the big moves in our life that change everything. Just days after Rosa Park's arrest, people began to organize a protest against segregated buses and they nominated a young preacher to lead the protest. That preacher? Martin Luther King Jr. As you can see, Rosa's refusal to give up her seat was a small step towards beginning a movement that would change the course of history. Similarly, one small act of courage can help spark a chain reaction in your life leading you to your dreams.

In an interview in 1956, Rosa Parks explained that she simply couldn't stand to be pushed anymore, she had been pushed her whole life. However, that moment that she took a stand for herself, she was pushed by something even greater: herself. This is what courage is. It is a push. Rosa Parks wasn't aware that her courage would eventually lead to so much more, just like you don't know the potential you have until you unleash your inner courage. Courage is birthright which is inside all of us. You may not have all the answers right now, but all you need is just five seconds to decide to begin the course of changing your life.

So when should you begin taking action in pursuit of changing your life? Right now! Life is full of excuses for not beginning to work towards your dreams. That's because life is full of fear. Fear of rejection, judgment, or

simply being wrong. But these fears are limiting yourself and if you're looking for validation before pursuing your dreams, then you will never achieve them. There is never a "right time" to begin something. There will never be a sign telling you to begin, and if you're looking for a sign, then this is it. Like Nike's slogan, "Just Do It!"

## **You'll Never Feel Like It**

How many times do you act on your feelings? You're planning on going to the gym after work, but once you leave the office you feel tired, so you don't go. Or maybe you receive a snarky email at work, so you immediately respond because you feel triggered and angry. And while those feelings are valid, you'll realize that you make almost every single decision in life with your feelings, but what you feel in that moment isn't necessarily what's best for you. You should get some exercise in, or think about that email and plan out a proper response before snapping back, right? Once you understand the role feelings play in your decision making, you will be able to beat them and make better decisions.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio says that human beings are “feeling machines that think,” not “thinking machines that feel” and that we make decisions based on our emotions 95% of the time. He conducted a study of people with brain damage who were unable to experience emotions or make decisions. Even though they could weigh out the pros and cons of their decisions, they still couldn't make them. This led Damasio to prove that we as humans “feel and act” versus “think and act.”

Feelings are merely suggestions that you need to learn to ignore and the first step is through taking action. You cannot control how you feel but you can always choose how you act; therefore, you need to learn how to tackle self-defeating feelings and get yourself to take action. This may sound like confidence, and that's exactly what it is. Confidence doesn't just appear overnight either, it's a skill that you practice and build upon through action. And how can you practice confidence? Through the 5-second rule. This rule is a tool for action that can lead to changing your behavior. You must push through those feelings that are stopping you and work hard to break the habits that are holding you back.

To begin practicing courage and confidence through the 5-second rule, you must take action despite how you feel. Maybe you feel tired and feel as if you can't wake up any earlier in the morning. Well, then perhaps start with



this simple challenge. Set your alarm 30 minutes earlier then 5-4-3-2-1 push yourself out of bed. Sure, you won't feel like it, but once you accomplish this, your brain will believe that you can accomplish other small tasks throughout the day, starting a chain reaction in your confidence.

# **Become the Most Productive Person you Know**

One of the biggest struggles we face as humans are finding the motivation to get things done. Finding ways to become productive and end procrastination is hard. We become distracted by our phones, television, etc. and it seems that we never get everything done that we planned. Well, that's where the 5-second rule is aimed to help. With strategies to help you improve your health, increase productivity, and end procrastination, you can learn how to become the most productive person you know through implementing the 5-second rule.

Merely thinking about making a healthier lifestyle, won't help you in achieving a healthier lifestyle. This is why taking action is an important step towards reaching your goal of a healthy body and mind. Why do your goals of getting healthy fail? It's your feelings about getting healthy that affect your goals. It's hard. It's expensive. It takes a lot of work to maintain. All of these are excuses used to make us feel that getting healthier is hard. But once you realize the secret to getting healthier is 5-4-3-2-1-GO! you'll realize that getting healthy is only made harder because of your feelings towards it. Exercise is 100% mental and if you can overcome excuses through the 5-second rule, you can change your health by pushing past your cravings and laziness. Remember, you don't have to feel like it, you just have to do it.

Productivity is mainly about one thing: focus. Therefore, in a world where distractions are constantly surrounding us, it's crucial to manage distractions and don't waste time on unimportant things. Distractions hinder your progress and are the kiss of death for your productivity. Remember that your goals are more important than push notifications. So 5-4-3-2-1 - remove the distractions. It's that simple.

Owning your mornings is one of the best ways to increase your productivity. According to Duke University professor Dan Ariely, the first two to three hours of the day are the best for your brain once you fully wake up. For peak productivity, never hit the snooze button. In fact, scientists recently

discovered that hitting the snooze button harms brain function and productivity that can last up to four hours. The science behind this phenomenon is that we sleep in 90 to 110-minute cycles. Therefore, if we hit the snooze button once our alarm rings, we are then pushing our bodies to undergo a new sleep cycle that will last another 90-110 minutes. Once undergoing this cycle, it can take up to four hours for your cognitive functions to return to their full capacity. So, create a morning routine.

Mel Robbins uses the 30 minutes before 7:30 strategy where she takes 30 minutes before 7:30 to plan her day or start on the most important tasks on her to-do list. By planning your day, you begin to focus on the right things that allow you to be more productive and successful. Limit distractions in the morning by not checking your phone until you have planned out your day and make a habit of writing down your daily goals. You are 42% more likely to achieve your objectives if you jot them down. Tailor your morning routine to work for you, but it's important to not only set a routine but to be consistent with it. So, when you're feeling tired or have the urge to check your social media, just remember: 5-4-3-2-1 - remove the distraction and own your productivity.

## **Become the Happiest Person you Know**

Struggling with fear and anxiety is common in today's society. With constant pressure to become your best self, and become the best in your career and your relationships, it's easy to fall into a downward spiral of negative thoughts. Mel Robbins struggled with fear and anxiety too and decided to see if the 5-second rule would help her cope. Turns out, Mel was able to stop taking medication for anxiety and became panic-attack-free. How did she do this? She learned to take control of her mind, direct her thoughts and dismantle her fears.

As adults, we find ourselves spending too much time and energy worrying about things that are outside of our control. Research shows that the biggest regret of people nearing the end of their lives was that they wish they hadn't spent so much time worrying. Their advice to others was that worrying is a waste of time. You have just one life and you should enjoy it. But how can you just stop worrying? Mel offers the solution of catching yourself as you are drifting into worry and then regaining mental control by counting back from 5. 5-4-3-2-1 - change the direction of your thoughts.

Catching yourself drifting into negative thoughts will be a daily struggle, you'll be amazed at how often you find yourself worrying, but if you practice the 5-second rule, you can train your mind to think more positively. For instance, Mel recalls feeling her heart swell with love when she had her daughter. She would become filled with so much love and joy when she watched her sleep as an infant or witnessed her in a beautiful gown for prom. However, that joy would quickly turn to worry as her mind filled with dreadful worst-case scenarios. Worry and fear began to rob these moments of happiness for Mel, and many of us can probably relate to similar moments of worry robbing our own joy.

But the 5-second rule is designed to help you regain control of your thoughts in moments like these. Counting backward will pull you out of your head and remind you to become present. It will help you switch gears from worry to focus. Instead, remind yourself of what you are grateful for in

that moment. According to neuroscientist Alex Korb, feeling grateful changes your brain's chemistry, it activates the brainstem region that produces dopamine and makes you feel good.

Think about the times when you have experienced extreme worry, times where you feel panicked. What happens to your body in these moments? Your heart races, your breathing increases, and cortisol surges. These are all coping mechanisms that your body goes through to prepare you for taking control of the situation. When experiencing anxiety you are in a state of physical agitation, so it's important to "reframe" your thinking to take back control of your body and calm down. Think about it. Feeling anxiety mimics the feeling of excitement. Whenever Mel feels nervous about speaking in public, she terms her nervousness as that of excitement. The two are physiologically the same thing, the only difference lies in how your mind responds to them. While Mel feels anxious before public speaking, she channels that energy into a positive direction rather than let her mind take a downward spiral of negative thinking. So, reframe your thinking and when you begin to feel moments of nervousness or worry, countdown 5-4-3-2-1, tell yourself that you are excited, and push yourself to move forward.

## **Become the Most Fulfilled Person you Know**

We've discussed the power of courage in part two, but now it's time to focus on how daily acts of courage can help you build your confidence. Throughout your journey practicing the 5-second rule, you'll learn how everyday courage will help you gain the confidence to pursue your passions. While you might believe that confidence is inherent, and something that people are born with, you'll be surprised to learn that confidence is a skill that you can work on. Confidence is created by small things you do every day as you consistently build trust in yourself.

For instance, Mel recalls a story of one of her followers who used the 5-second rule to approach the CEO of his company and strike up a conversation. Through that small act of courage, he was able to share his ideas with the CEO and secure a job interview that could change the trajectory of his life. That made him feel good and as if he could do anything he set his mind to. These tiny acts of everyday courage will help you build up your confidence as you learn to trust yourself. In fact, these small things are not small at all, they add up and are the most important aspect of building confidence.

Some of you may be thinking that "I am an introvert" or "this doesn't come naturally to me." If you are one of those people then you must remember that nothing comes naturally and that your personality can be changed. Reminding yourself that nothing comes naturally allows you the ability to work on improving, changing, or enriching every aspect of your life through action. According to a Cambridge University professor, some of our traits are more fixed and automatic, but others can be adjusted through deliberate action.

Having the courage to take action will lead to confidence within yourself and the more you practice the 5-second rule, the faster your confidence will grow. To help you in your practice, try to stop focusing on the big things. Instead, 5-4-3-2-1-GO during the smallest thing and you will notice that those small actions will create a ripple effect that can change your life. By

practicing small acts of courage, you will gain confidence, control, and a sense of pride that will make you feel so good.

To quote Glinda the Good Witch from the Wizard of Oz, “You’ve always had the power, my dear, you just had to learn it for yourself.” What can you take away from this? Well, as Mel Robbins says, you have to power to change your life. She believes that you have to power to move mountains, but that power isn’t going to just fall in your lap. Instead, it takes courage and action. You have just one life, so make the most of it. You may not be able to change the past, but it’s never too late to work towards a better future and you can do that in just five seconds. That is the power of everyday courage. A moment of courage can change your day. One day can change your life, and your life could change the world. Mel sees the greatness in you, it’s time to reveal it. 5-4-3-2-1- GO...

## **Final Summary**

In just five seconds, you have the power to change your life. Your mind is the only thing holding you back from fulfilling your dreams and reaching your goals. A change in mindset can give you the power to take control of your life and become the happiest, most productive, and most fulfilled person you know. However, it's not enough to just think or tell people your dreams, you must act. Taking action can be scary. But once you reframe your thinking to trick your mind, you can turn that fear into excitement and you can build the courage and confidence to take on the world. Remember that your personality and your mindset is not fixed, you can change for the better and begin achieving your dreams, and you can do it all in just five seconds.





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