

# SUMMARY

## THE 5 AM CLUB

ROBIN SHARMA



# **Summary of "The 5 AM Club"** **by Robin Sharma**

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What does an artist, an entrepreneur, and a  
billionaire have in common? They all start their  
mornings at 5 AM!

Introduction	5
The 5 a.m Club	6
Elite Performers Get up at 5 AM	7
How to Be a Historymaker	9
Your Four Interior Empires	11
The 20/20/20 Formula	13
Embrace Sleep	15
Final Summary	17

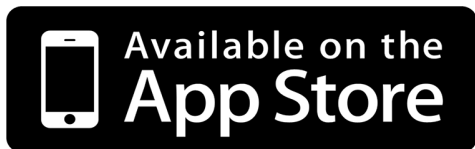


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# Introduction

What's the secret to becoming a billionaire? There must be one because if we all knew how to get there, surely everybody would have a billion dollars by now! But the truth is that there is no singular secret to success; everyone employs different methods on their road to achieving their dreams. And in the case of one very successful billionaire, that secret was starting his day at 5 a.m. In fact, he was so confident in this method that he attributed all his success to that one simple practice instead of his natural business acumen or the hours he'd invested in his company. And fortunately for you, it's not a secret! Through the course of this summary, we'll learn how to join what he called "the 5 a.m club" and why it can revolutionize your life. We'll even take a look at some interesting facts like:

- Why slowing down your brain is so important
- Why early mornings are key for jump-starting your day
- What a successful morning routine looks like

# The 5 a.m Club

For the purpose of this summary, let's imagine a group of people and let's say their roles are similar to those of the members of The Breakfast Club. We have an entrepreneur who feels his life lacks purpose. We have a frustrated artist who's trying to spark their creativity. And last but not least, we have a billionaire mentor, a wacky character with some unconventional success secrets to share. So, let's say they all meet at a professional conference which centers around a keynote speaker known as "The Spellbinder," a business guru renowned for his ability to captivate audiences and impart life-changing success tips.

So, following the keynote speech, the billionaire approaches our artist and entrepreneur in disguise. Rather than dressing like a billionaire, he was, in fact severely under-dressed for the occasion. But this too was part of a calculated strategy: to remind himself and others that money isn't everything and that you can't judge someone's wealth or worth by their appearance, he often dressed as though he was very poor indeed. Given his appearance, you can imagine the others' surprise when he told them that he'd made a fortune by following the Spellbinder's advice and that the Spellbinder was actually his personal mentor. Already intrigued, the two listened as he told them how the Spellbinder had taught him that many people want extraordinary things to happen to them, but that truly great people understand they can create those extraordinary events themselves.

So, when he told them that the key to unlocking an extraordinary future lay in one tip that was more important than anything else, they couldn't wait to find out what it was. They were even more surprised when he told them that the secret was as simple as crafting "a world-beating morning routine." But when the billionaire offered to teach them everything he knew the next day if they met him at 5 a.m, they jumped at the chance. And that's how their journey began.

# Elite Performers Get up at 5 AM

Like most of us, our artist and entrepreneur weren't used to getting up that early in the morning and they listened blearily as their new mentor told them that getting up at 5 a.m. had taught him to break free of the mediocrity that so easily ensnares people. He also informed them that rising at this hour had enabled a number of successful people to revolutionize their productivity and rise to the top of their game, including such notable greats as Mozart and John Grisham! Here's why it works.

We all have a limited amount of mental energy for each day; think of it as your cognitive bandwidth. That limited bandwidth gets occupied by a variety of conflicting sources throughout the day; from the moment you wake up, everything from your job and your relationships to the news and social media are demanding your attention. These constant demands leave us feeling pressured to multitask, ping-ponging our attention back and forth from one thing to another so that our ability to focus on one consistent thing is severely weakened. But by lunchtime, we've already been inundated with so many demands that our ability to focus on anything is almost depleted. But starting your day at 5 a.m. effectively hotwires your brain so you can maximize your focus!

That's all thanks to the concept of transient hypofrontality. Put simply, this means that when you wake up at 5 a.m., your brain's prefrontal cortex-- which processes rational thought-- is temporarily impaired. So if, like me, you typically start your day being plagued by worries, doubts, and fears, one advantage of getting up at 5 a.m. is the ability to temporarily silence them. And as an added bonus, during this time of day, your brain is pre-programmed to stimulate the production of dopamine and serotonin, both of which will make you happier and give you a more peaceful start to the day!

So, when you minimize unproductive thoughts and negative self-talk and replace them with energy, peace, and productivity, it stands to reason that

you'll enter a natural state of flow in which you're happier and more focused. And if you start your day with that kind of boost, there's no limit to what you can accomplish! But if that's not enough to convince you to forego a few hours of sleep, you might also want to consider this: if you want to be at the top of your game and class yourself amongst the top 5% of the world's elite performers, you have to be willing to make commitments that the other 95% of the world aren't willing to make. And most people definitely aren't willing to get up at 5 a.m. So, if you want a huge competitive advantage, this is a great way to get ahead!



# How to Be a Historymaker

There are people who accomplish things and then there are people who make history and become household names. The latter category is comprised of people who set records, break boundaries, and make contributions so significant that they are immortalized through their success. But what's the difference? And what determines the type of success you have? According to our billionaire mentor, a historymaker is defined by their four areas of focus.

The first is their ability to capitalize on their talents. This doesn't mean that they're the most talented people, but rather that they make the most of what they have. So, instead of comparing your gifts to someone else's and assuming you don't have what it takes, capitalize on the talents you do have and use them to make a difference! The second key area of focus is the ability to free yourself from distractions. This is especially vital because it's probably the number one problem that holds people back. And whether your distraction comes in the form of social media addiction or a toxic relationship that drains you of your energy, neither of these distractions can remain in your life if you want to be a winner. So, to cultivate a winning worldview, it's crucial that you focus, simplify, and concentrate.

Start by eliminating multi-tasking from your life and become a purist instead, devoting your attention only to a few key projects instead of spreading yourself thin between loads of little tasks throughout the day. It's also vital that you eliminate distractions, so take an aggressive spring cleaning approach to the mental clutter of your life! Turn off notifications when it's inhibiting your focus. Cancel activities that don't add joy and value to your life. And most importantly, give yourself a distraction-free hour to jumpstart your day by joining the 5 A.M club!

Thirdly, it's also important to understand the power of day-stacking. Put simply, day-stacking means that accomplishing a few small tasks each day is more important than doing a couple of big things once in a while. So,

work on strengthening one small skill or ability a little bit at a time each day! If you want to get on top of your email inbox, cultivate a better daily routine, or improve your performance in a few little areas, this is the perfect way to do it. And last but not least, the final key area of focus for historymakers is practicing personal mastery. This concept is based off psychologist Anders Ericsson's theory that a person must invest 2.75 hours of daily practice in a skill before they reach the level of elite mastery. So, if you want to master yourself and truly become capable of orchestrating a successful future, invest the first two hours of each day in working deeply on yourself, your mindset, and your attitude.

# Your Four Interior Empires

If you've ever attended a professional conference, chances are that you-- like our artist and entrepreneur-- have frequently heard that you should work on your mindset. But the billionaire acknowledged that the mindset is actually only one of four interior empires which require constant attention and personal improvement! And although working on your mindset is great, if that's the only area you focus on, that means you're ignoring your Heartset, Healthset, and Soulset! So, let's take a look at each of these sets and their roles in your life.

Your Heartset is exactly what it sounds like: it's the state of your emotional well-being. And because each of your four interior empires are connected, the strength and stability of your Mindset doesn't matter if your Heartset is in shambles. And even though Sigmund Freud has largely been discredited, he was right when he asserted that, "Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and they will come forth later in uglier ways." So, if you consider that truth and the impact that emotional instability can have on your life, it follows naturally that when you develop your emotional well-being, you're laying the foundation for a healthier, more stable life across the board.

Your Healthset is also important because, as you might imagine, you're pretty limited by what you can accomplish if you're in poor health. So, commit to your future success by taking care of yourself in the present and make a commitment to boost your health and productivity by pursuing exercise. The physical and emotional benefits of exercise are well-documented, but it doesn't hurt to be reminded that exercise can increase the flow of positive hormones and reduce stress, both of which can greatly benefit your personal life and career!

And last but not least, it's crucial that you also focus on your Soulset. Think of your Soulset as your spirituality or what keeps you centered. By focusing on your Soulset, you'll be able to connect with the truest version of yourself

and relinquish your ties to the temporal and superficial elements of everyday life. Getting up at 5 A.M can help with this too because this early start will give you a window of clarity and opportunity which you can use to reflect on what you have to offer the world.

# The 20/20/20 Formula

So, now that we've learned about our four interior empires, let's take a look at some practical everyday strategies we can use to develop them. Because although getting up at 5 A.M might sound like a magic cure-all, nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, unless you use that time to be productive and take actionable steps towards personal improvement, 5 A.M will be no different from any other hour you could get up. Instead, as you've probably guessed, the truth is that the real magic lies in how you use that time. And the billionaire's 20/20/20 method is the perfect way to optimize your productivity.

Operating on the principle that you should use 20 minutes to move, 20 minutes to reflect, and 20 minutes to grow, this method taps into each of your four inner empires and helps you strengthen them for a healthy start to your day. So, first start by engaging in 20 minutes of vigorous exercise. I know that's probably the last thing you want to do at 5:00 A.M, but remember what we talked about earlier, about how your brain is free of inhibitions and stresses at this hour? The good news is that if you can spring out of bed at 5 A.M, you'll sort of get a chance to catch your brain off-guard before it's awake enough to remind you that you don't like exercising at 5 A.M. So, take advantage of that opportunity and concentrate on moving vigorously enough to really work up a sweat.

You want to specifically ensure you're sweaty because sweat decreases the cortisol, or fear hormone, in your brain and generates the protein BDNF, which promotes the formulation of new neural connections. This means that just 20 minutes of active sweating can actually program your brain to think faster, which will enhance your productivity for the day! Once you've done that, use the little window of time between 5:20-5:40 A.M as a time of deep reflection and solitude. Before your day is flooded with conflicting pressures and distractions, take a few moments to reflect on what's most important to you and use this time of reflection to center your focus on your top priorities.

Once you've taken about 10 minutes to reflect, use the remaining 10 minutes to write your thoughts down in a journal. Document your ambitions, fears, frustrations, and the things you're grateful for in a journal. As you do so, envision yourself surrendering these stresses to the paper and removing their weight from your own heart and mind. After you're finished writing, use your remaining few minutes to meditate. Studies show that meditation also helps to reduce fear, so if you start your day by engaging in two activities that decrease your fear hormones, you'll have a doubly fearless start to your day! Meditating on the new insights you've gained through your reflecting and journaling can also help you to feel calmer and more centered and you'll be able to carry this sense of peace with you throughout your day.

Now it's time to use the last 20 minutes of your morning's first hour. This is the time for growth, so take these 20 minutes to learn. Whether you're listening to a podcast that stimulates thought, reading a biography, or learning something new about business, psychology, or innovation, you can tailor your learning experience to the interests that most benefit you and your career. Keep in mind that every successful historymaker is also defined by their love of learning and commitment to growth, so dedicate yourself to spending 20 minutes of each morning in pursuit of knowledge.

So, there you have it! This method not only provides you with a ready-made perfect morning routine, it also shows you how to unlock the full potential that's accessible to any member of the 5 A.M club.

# Embrace Sleep

A system which asks you to get up at 5 A.M probably doesn't sound like one which prioritizes sleep, but in fact, a good night's sleep is integral to achieving life-changing results with the 5 A.M club! Because, as the billionaire explained to his new proteges, research has shown that sleep is one of the key factors at play when it comes to predicting life expectancy. And how you spend the last hour of your day is every bit as crucial as the way you spend your first!

If you're like pretty much everybody today, you know that whether you're a working professional, a student, or a parent, we're all sleep deprived. Studies show that technology can be pinpointed as the primary source of our sleep deprivation, especially given that the blue lights produced by our phones and TVs-- our favorite devices to look at before we go to sleep-- reduce melatonin, which is precisely the chemical that promotes sleep. So, in order to cultivate healthy sleep patterns, leading sleep research advocates disconnecting from your tech devices no later than 8 p.m. Doing so will help you achieve a better quality of sleep and feel truly well-rested by your 5 A.M wake-up time! However, sleeping isn't the only way to rejuvenate yourself. Another great strategy the billionaire recommends for maximizing your performance is something called the twin-cycle of elite performance.

Here's how it works: rather than burning yourself out with prolonged periods of frantic productivity where you try to accomplish everything that needs to be done, oscillate between periods of passionate work and deep renewal to bring balance to your life. By intentionally dedicating your time to relaxation as well as work, you're recognizing the value of mental health and optimizing your potential. And as you make active efforts at self-care, you minimize the potential for burnout, thus giving yourself room to grow in both a performance phase and a recovery phase.

However, that may be difficult for some of us to accept. Those who operate on an “all work, no play” mentality like our entrepreneur in the story might struggle with the necessity of slowing down and taking time off. We might even feel guilty when we’re not working, as if we’re using our time for less worthy things. But if we remember the value of tending to our interior empires, we can recognize the necessity of balance and cultivate a healthier life.



# Final Summary

Owning the first hours of your morning is critical to unlocking your potential for each day. So, if you want to boost your creativity and optimize your productivity, make a habit of getting up at 5 A.M each day and using that first hour to follow the 20/20/20 method so you can jumpstart your day.



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