

THE 5 SECOND RULE BY MEL ROBBINS

In The 5 Second Rule Mel Robbins shares a useful tool that will help you in all areas of life. The 5 second rule can help you in those everyday moments of difficulty, uncertainty and fear. It can help you improve your health, increase productivity and combat procrastination. Robbins helps you be courageous and step outside of your comfort zone. And most importantly, Robbins explains how easy it is to take control and make a change!

5 SECONDS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Ways to use the 5 second rule:

- To push yourself
- Become more influential at work
- Be more productive
- Step outside your comfort zone
- Become more efficient at networking
- To self-monitor and control your emotions
- To manage, engage, motivate and encourage team members

Every single day we face moments that are difficult, uncertain, and scary. Your life requires courage. And that is exactly what the Rule will help you discover—the courage to become your greatest self.

Courage

Courage is the ability to do something that is difficult or scary. Stepping outside of your comfort zone. Sharing your ideas, speaking up, or showing up. Standing firm in your beliefs and values. And some days...getting out of bed.

Goals & dreams

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. Because, as 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 5 SECOND RULE

“The moment you have an instinct to act on a goal you must count 5-4-3-2-1 and physically move or your brain will stop you.”

For example: If you start to feel too tired to exercise, count 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 and push yourself out the door for a run. Don't give yourself time to come up with any further excuses.

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.

The Rule is (in the language of habit research) a “starting ritual” that activates the prefrontal cortex, helping to change your behaviour. The prefrontal cortex is the part of your brain that you use when you focus, change, or take deliberate actions.

Taking action

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 accurately describe.

Forget motivation, it's a myth

The idea that in order to change you must “feel” eager or “feel” motivated to act is 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.

One of the reasons why the 5 Second Rule is so empowering is because it turns you into the kind of person who operates with a bias toward action. If you tend to overthink every move, you'll discover the energy and confidence to stop thinking and actually move. Using the Rule strengthens your belief that you do have the ability to control your own fate—because you are proving it to yourself one push at a time.

The Rule doesn't make these things easy; it makes them happen. That's why it's described as a tool.

Small moves

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. 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 fact that hesitating, holding yourself back, and overthinking are habits is good news. There's a simple, proven way to break or replace bad habits and the 5 Second Rule is the easiest way to do it.

HOW DO I USE THE RULE

Start by counting backwards to yourself: 5- 4- 3- 2- 1. The counting will help you focus on the goal or commitment and distract you from the worries, thoughts, and fears in your mind. As soon as you reach "1," move. That's it. Anytime there's something you know you should do, but you feel uncertain, afraid, or overwhelmed...just take control by counting backwards 5- 4- 3- 2- 1. That'll quiet your mind. Then, move when you get to 1.

What can you use it for?

- To change your behaviour. You can use the Rule to push yourself to create new habits, pull yourself away from destructive habits, and master the skills of self-monitoring and self-control.
- To act with everyday courage. You can use the Rule to discover the courage you need to do things that are new, scary, or uncertain. The Rule will quiet your self-doubt and build confidence as you push yourself to pursue your passions etc.
- To control your mind. Use the Rule to stop the barrage of negative thoughts and endless worries that weigh you down. You can also break the habit of anxiety and beat any fear.

THE POWER OF COURAGE

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 precisely what the 5 Second Rule gives you.

That's what courage is. It's 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.

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.

What are you waiting for?

Sometimes there is no next time, no second chance, or no time out. Stop waiting. It's now or never. When you wait, you aren't procrastinating. You are doing something more dangerous. You are deliberately convincing yourself "now is not the time." You are actively working against your dreams.

When you make excuses and talk yourself into waiting, you are limiting your ability to make your dreams come true.

Follow your dreams

The difference between people who make their dreams come true and those of us who don't is just one thing: 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.

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—you'll discover the power inside of you.

You'll never feel like it

We like to think that we use logic or consider our goals when we make decisions but that's not the case. According to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, it's our feelings that decide for us 95% of the time. You feel before you think. You feel before you act. And that's how you ultimately make decisions—based on how you feel.

Every time we have a decision to make, we subconsciously tally all the pros and cons of our choices and then make a gut call, based on how we feel. This happens in a nanosecond. That's why none of us catches it.

Change is hard. Logically, we know what we should do, but our feelings about doing it make our decision for us. Your feelings will make the decision before you even realize what happened. How you feel in the moment is almost never aligned with your goals and your dreams. If you only act when you feel like it, you will never get what you want.

You must learn how to separate what you feel from the actions that you take. If you don't feel like attacking the to-do list on your desk, you won't, but 5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO, and you can force yourself to start working on it.

You can't control how you feel, but you can control how you act.

How to start

The fastest way to implement the #5SecondRule is to start by doing 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.

1. 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 5 Second Rule.
2. 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.
3. You'll 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.

COURAGE CHANGES YOUR BEHAVIOUR

There are three behavior changes that we receive emails about constantly: health, productivity, and procrastination. The 5 second rule can help in all 3 areas.

Health

The fact is that thinking about being healthier won't make you healthier. Even meditation, which is a mental exercise, still requires that you DO IT. There is no getting around this. You must take action.

The moment you accept the fact that we just want to do the things that feel easy, you realize the secret to getting healthy is simple—you'll never feel like it, you just have to 5- 4- 3- 2- 1-GO!

If you want to lose weight, follow a diet, and regularly exercise, there's only one thing you must do: Stop thinking about how you feel. Your feelings don't matter. The only thing that matters is what you DO.

Exercise and health comes down to one simple rule—you don't have to feel like it. You just have to do it. Go to the gym, cook a healthy meal, avoid the fast food. Take actions towards your goals.

Productivity

Productivity can be boiled down to one word—FOCUS. There are two types of focus you need to master productivity:

1. The ability to manage distractions so that you can focus moment-to-moment on the task at hand.
2. The skill of focusing on what's truly important to you in the big picture, so you don't waste your day on stupid stuff.

Learn how to manage distractions - first you must decide that distractions are not good. Interruptions of any sort are the kiss of death for your productivity. You have to decide that your goals are more important than push notifications. It's that simple. Then you just remove them. When you start to

remove distractions and are able to focus on the moment-to-moment things that matter you will have “no idea” how much it will help.

Big picture focus - own your mornings. Taking control of your mornings is a game changer for productivity. Create a morning routine that helps you focus on your priorities. Customise it to your needs, include some planning time for the day ahead. Add exercise or meditation. Create a routine that you can do every single day.

Procrastination

Productive procrastination - this is not the problem. If you are working on a creative or innovative project, research shows that procrastination is not only good, but it is also important. The creative process takes time, so when you set a project aside for a few days or weeks, your mind can wander.

Destructive procrastination - is when we avoid the work we need to get done and know there will be negative consequences. For a long time, everyone believed procrastination meant poor time management skills, a lack of willpower, or lack of self-discipline. Procrastination is not a form of laziness at all. It's a coping mechanism for stress.

- If procrastinating is a habit, you have to replace the bad behavior pattern (avoidance) with a new positive one (getting started).
- The moment you feel yourself hesitate, doing easier tasks, or avoiding hard work, use the Rule, 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 push yourself to start the important thing you need to do.
- Getting started takes us back to our engineer at CISCO and the concept of a “locus of control.” Procrastination makes you feel like you have no control over yourself. When you assert yourself and just get started, you are taking control of the moment and your life.

STOP WORRYING

More than any other change, ending your habit of worrying will create the single biggest positive impact in your life. Believe it or not, you were taught how to worry as a kid.

As adults, we spend way too much time and energy worrying about things that we can't control or that could go wrong. When you get to be near the end of your life, you'll wish you hadn't.

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.

Ask yourself...

When your mind takes you somewhere sad, dark, doubtful, or negative, you don't have to go with it. Start by asking yourself, "what am I grateful for in this moment? What do I want to remember?" When you ask that simple question, you impact your brain at a biological level. In order to respond you have to take stock of your life, relationships, and work and search for an answer in the moment.

It forces you to focus on the positive aspects of your life. As soon as you think about what you are grateful for, you'll start feeling grateful instead of worried.

END ANXIETY

Anxiety is what happens when your habit of worrying spirals out of control. The key to beating anxiety is understanding it. If you can catch it right as it kicks in and reframe it, you'll stabilize your thoughts before your mind escalates it into full blown panic. And over time, as you use the 5 Second Rule over and over, your anxiety will weaken and become what it started—out as simple worries. As you just learned, the habit of worry is easy to break.

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.

Redirect the anxious energy

Use the 5 Second Rule 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.

Instead of saying you feel anxious about something, try saying you feel excited. Now, here's the catch about telling yourself "I'm excited"—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.

BUILDING REAL CONFIDENCE

A big mistake people make is thinking that confidence is a matter of personality. Confidence just means that you believe in yourself, your ideas, and your capabilities. Anyone can learn how to become more confident. It's not a personality trait. It's a skill.

Confidence in yourself is built through acts of everyday courage. Confidence is created by the small things you do every single day that build trust in yourself. Speak up in meetings, sign up for something you wouldn't usually.

Small things are not small at all. They are the most important things of all. And they add up. Pushing yourself to 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 on the "small things" gives you confidence to do the "big scheme of things."

PURSING PASSION

Use the 5 Second Rule 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.

Start Exploring - hire the best guide you can find: your 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.

Build momentum

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 what you're learning with people at work, so you use the Rule push yourself to do it. That's when momentum kicks in.

The courage to commit

There's no magic formula for when to pull the trigger and turn a passion project into a passion-driven career or major life change. It requires planning and some slow, deep thinking. If you are anything like the rest of us, you'll torture yourself for a while until you can't stand straddling your present life and the future one.

You need to ask yourself the Heart First question, "Am I ready to commit to this?" instead of the Feeling First question, "Do I feel ready to commit to this?" You'll never feel ready. The moment you answer yes to the question "Am I ready to commit to this?" you'll need to use the Rule to give yourself that final push. Even when you are ready, it's not going to feel good when you do it.