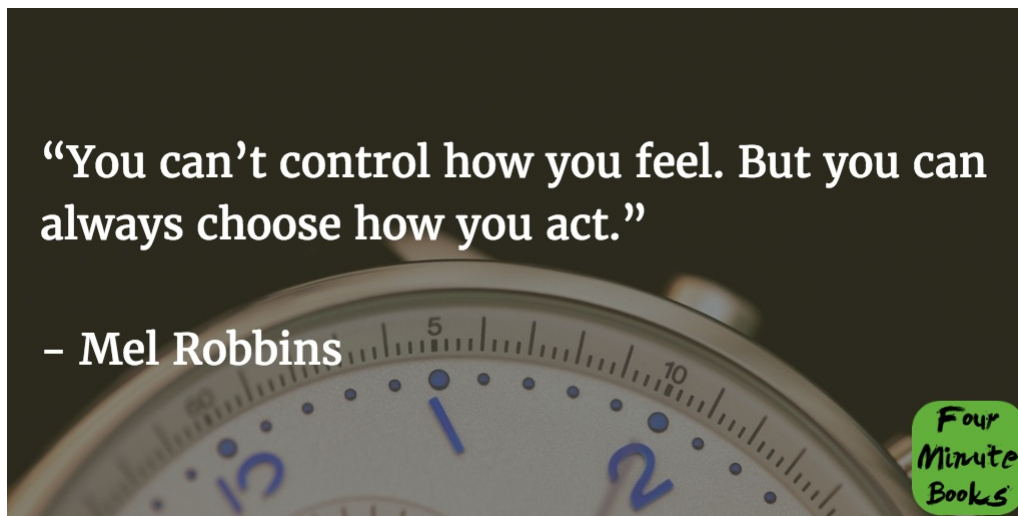


**1-Sentence-Summary:** *The 5 Second Rule* is a simple tool that undercuts most of the psychological weapons your brain employs to keep you from taking action, which will allow you to procrastinate less, live happier and reach your goals.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



I bet you've used counting as a psychological trick to get yourself to do something. Maybe you've counted to three before jumping off the diving board at the pool, or tried slowly counting to ten to calm yourself down when you were angry. The main reason these tactics work is that they help us focus on what we need to do and cut out all the consequences we don't like to consider.

Several years ago, CNN contributor, world-famous speaker and bestselling author Mel Robbins found her own little counting trick. Back then, she was none of those things. She was unemployed, in financial trouble, drinking too much and losing grip on her duties as a mom and wife.

One night, she noticed a commercial on TV that showed a rocket launch. 5...4...3...2...1 – go! She thought it was stupid at first, but the next morning, she decided to launch herself out of bed, just like a rocket. After counting down from five, she stood up, and that's how she discovered *The 5 Second Rule*. It changed everything.

Today, as she spreads awareness of the rule, she defines it as follows:

“If you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within 5 seconds or your brain will kill the idea.”

Here are 3 reasons why this simple idea of a 5-second countdown can do the same for you:

1. Through little acts of courage, the 5 Second Rule makes you less afraid over time.
2. There are three reasons the “right time” will never come, so you just have to start.
3. The 5 Second Rule helps to override your feelings, a tactic which is called psychological intervention.

If you're sick of telling others and yourself you're feeling “fine,” when you're clearly not happy with where you are in life, this is for you. 5...4...3...2...1 – go!

## Lesson 1: The 5 Second Rule builds courage like compounding interest.

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When we read stories about our heroes or biographies of historical figures, we tend to see people of extraordinary courage and bravery. That's not the case. They were just as shy, anxious and afraid as you and I. It just so happened that throughout their life, they made a lot of small, courageous choices, which added up and now they're all we remember.

Mel uses Rosa Parks as an example. On December 1st, 1955, she refused to give up her “seat for colored people” for a white person on the bus. She was arrested and four days later, recruited a young preacher to help organize a protest. Swept away by the momentum he didn't think much and agreed to take the lead. The name of that preacher was Martin Luther King Jr.

Neither of the two knew what their actions would lead to. Their gut just told them to act a certain way in a particular moment and instead of overriding it, they went with the impulse. A while back, I told the story of how I finally approached my crush thanks to “20 seconds of courage” from We Bought A Zoo, which essentially works just like the 5 Second Rule.

I can confirm that **from each small act of courage, more courage follows**. It compounds and hopefully, when you're old, you can look back on a courageous life.

## Lesson 2: You can stop waiting for “the right time,” because it'll never come for three reasons.

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Here are two universal facts: One, we all want to change our lives one way or the other and two, we spend most of our time waiting for that change to magically occur. Our excuse is always the same: “I'm waiting for the right moment.” Yeah, right. Of course deep down we know that moment will never come. But Mel actually tells us why that is. She names three reasons:

1. Change is always *new*.
2. It always comes with *uncertainty*.

3. It's always *scary*.

Whether you want to lose weight, make more money or start dating, those three factors are always there. They're no less true tomorrow, next week or six months from now. Yes, you have to do something new, like signing up for the gym. And you're not guaranteed to make \$10,000 from your side hustle. Showing up to a blind date will always make you nervous.

**Whatever you want that you don't have, it'll always require doing new, scary and uncertain things**, which makes waiting even a day longer nothing but a cop-out and a waste of time.

That's why the 5 Second Rule can be your best friend. Even if the first action you take is tiny, like or setting a reminder in your phone, it's an action nonetheless and that's the only thing that matters.

## Lesson 3: Feelings are just suggestions, which is why you should use psychological intervention to override them.

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Okay, so we need courage to stop waiting, but why do we wait so much anyway? To answer this, Mel refers to world-renowned neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's work. In a book called Descartes' Error, he lays out the results of his research that suggest as much as 95% of our decisions are ultimately decided by feelings, not facts. He therefore calls us "feeling machines that think, not thinking machines that feel."

In other words, the sequence of events usually isn't think, then act, but feel, then act. As a result, the simple reason we often don't act all is that we "don't feel like it." To solve this problem, Mel suggests we should professional athletes inspire us. They consider feelings suggestions, rather than absolutes, which allows them to override them, for example with the 5 Second Rule, and push further towards their goal. If you ever thought you couldn't run, swim or bike any further, but did anyway, you know this is possible.

Choose good behavior and good feelings will follow. Ready? 5...4...3...2...1 – go!

## The 5 Second Rule Review

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Of course you don't need anything else to give The 5 Second Rule a try, but as we just learned, explaining an idea is rarely enough to get us to take action. If you want to learn more first, take a look at Mel's TedX talk. She's full of upbeat, positive energy and it's quite contagious!

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the author >>](#)

## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- Which core psychological shift the 5 Second Rule helps you to make
- How many people are holding back feedback at work because it's "not the right time"
- Why the 5 Second Rule also helps combat procrastination
- What a professor learned from talking about the meaning of life with 1,200 senior citizens

## Who would I recommend The 5 Second Rule summary to?

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The 16 year old C student, who doesn't really want to go to college, but hasn't started working on an alternative yet, the 41 year old mom, who feels overwhelmed with all of her obligations and anyone who's waiting for the right time to execute their big idea.