

Managing Emotions

The 5 Second Rule for Taking Action and Shifting Your State

Do you ever find yourself knowing what you need to do but just not able to get yourself to do it?

In order to understand why this happens, you need to understand activation energy. In chemistry, activation energy is the term used to describe the phenomenon that a tremendous amount of energy is needed in order to start any chemical reaction. Then, after this initial spark, a lot less energy is needed to keep it going.

Activation energy applies to human behavior too. Not having activation energy is why it can be so hard to get started, whether we're trying to go to the gym, make a phone call, or get out of bed.

Sometimes we need to create a SPARK to get us moving, that's big enough to keep us going. Other times we need to light a fire under our butt to remind us the big reason why we need to take this action.

So, the best strategy to create the SPARK that helps you take the first step toward ANYTHING is to use the 5-second rule. (*We have author and speaker Mel Robbins to thank for this gem!*)

Why 5 seconds? Because your brain is wired to avoid risk and fear change. When the thought comes to your mind of the thing you want to do (but that you haven't done because of fear or resistance), if you wait more than 5 seconds your brain will try to talk you out of it, again. It will bring up all of the reasons you "shouldn't" do it, why it isn't a good time, what could go wrong, or the most clever one—"I don't feel like it." Well, unless what you're trying to do is 100% pleasurable (which it can't be, otherwise you wouldn't have to make yourself do it) chances are you will NEVER "feel like it". Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting you should be forcing yourself to do things that truly aren't right for you. Don't make yourself suffer. Don't go against what your heart is telling you. But if your heart is telling you YES and your body still won't get in gear, give it a nudge!

By taking action, any small action, within 5 seconds you outsmart your own brain.

Here's how the 5 SECOND RULE works:

Anytime you have an idea that will better your situation, act IMMEDIATELY—within 5 seconds. Don't think, just do!

When the thought comes, start counting from 5 down to 1 and GET MOVING. There are 2 reasons that THIS IS THE KEY TO WHY THE 5 SECOND RULE WORKS!

1. It signals to your brain that there is an END to the countdown. If you counted from 1 to 5 you could keep going.
2. Counting distracts your mind, preventing it from thinking you out of it.

So, next time an idea comes to mind of something you know that if you did it you'd receive positive results, use the 5 second rule to DO IT NOW. When the thought comes, "I should make that phone call" count 5... 4... think of where your phone is... 3... 2... reach for your phone... 1... dial the number.