

**Intelligent
Change**

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The
FIVE-MINUTE
JOURNAL

The simplest, most effective thing you
can do every day to be happier.



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Dedication

To lifelong learners and doers.
You're changing the world every day.

Five reasons why you'll love The Five Minute Journal

1 It's the simplest, most effective thing you can do every day to be happier. It's been proven over and over again that shifting your focus to the positive can dramatically improve your happiness. The key is consistency. With a positive quote every day, a weekly challenge and a structure to help you focus on what's good, you will find The Five Minute Journal to be a great way to start and end the day.

2 It's built on proven principles of positive psychology. Somehow, it took psychologists about 80 years or so to realize it's better to focus on positive behavioral traits as opposed to depression, anxiety, and perceptual disorders. This journal has been created by combining practical elements that can make a positive impact in your life. You've been spared the hours and weeks of moving through dense academic jargon. It's all here and made easy for you to implement in your daily routine.

3 It's a journal for people who don't write journals. If you are the kind of person who always wanted to write a journal, but life, excuses and email took precedence, look no further. The Five Minute Journal was designed for you. Whatever your excuses are for not keeping a journal, this journal will eliminate them.

4 You'll have a snapshot of your days, weeks, months and years. When was the last time you saw pictures from a few years ago? Did you pause to feel the nostalgia and smile silently to yourself? Imagine if you could have the same experience by just flipping to a certain day on a specific year in your life, you could zoom in on who you were, what you did and how you felt on that day. It will be your own chronicle of memories, ideas and dreams.

5 Have a problem sticking to a commitment? It's okay. The Five Minute Journal has you covered. (see page 36). Inside you will find tips and tricks to foolproof your commitment to write frequently. How often do we shrink away from a commitment that we know is good for us? Overweight doctors, procrastinating professors, and unfaithful presidents prove this point. You will discover simple, effective actions you can take to stay the course. You will get in the habit of writing this journal every day and focusing on positive changes in your life.

It is all possible. In under five minutes a day.

Those who don't
believe in magic
will never find it.

Roald Dahl

The Five Minute Journal is not a magic pill.
Although, there is certainly some magic at work here.

You still have to do the work in the real world.

Get out of your comfort zone.

Take action and make magic happen.

This journal is your guide.

You are ready.

HOW IT WORKS

We are what we
repeatedly do.
Excellence, then,
is not an act,
but a habit.

Will Durant

Chances are you have come across quotes like the one from Durant on the left. They make us evaluate our present habits in a split second and think about the things we need to change. Even if you consider yourself to be ambitious, chances are you find it difficult to implement a series of new behaviors in your life.

You see, common sense is not common action.

That is why 44% of doctors are overweight.¹ You could bet they spent the majority of their youth buried behind a book telling them about the merits of exercise and diet. Repeat after us—reading a book on how to ride a bicycle does not qualify you for the Tour de France.

Research in self-control and self-regulation shows willpower to be a limited resource similar to a muscle that tires with use.² Chronically stressed humans find it difficult

to resist temptation, ranging from the seemingly benign like a latte, to a no-holds-barred shopping spree. What is one to do? Forgo the shopping spree and opt for the latte? Or is there another option?

Fortunately, with a little inspiration from high achievers we have read about, we offer you this neat, little journal. Don't let the simplicity fool you. It combines several principles that can weave the fabric of your new life.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Wisdom from ancient and modern times teach us that the beginning and the end of the day is a time to think, evaluate, and correct course. Regardless of when your day begins or ends, few people have established positive rituals that allow them to thrive.

Contrary to popular opinion, such established positive rituals are not restricted to the domain of ultra successful CEOs or Buddhist monks.

We recommend you keep this journal with a pen at your bedside. Let this be the first impulse when you wake up and the final impulse before you sleep. Let The Five Minute Journal hold that coveted spot on your bedside table,

just the perfect arm's reach away. You will be richly rewarded.

In about five minutes per day, you can establish a positive pattern of thinking and acting when it really matters. It's the ideal time window that allows for minimal effort and a wild reward.

Onward.

The Morning Routine

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Today's Gratitude List

What are three things that you can be grateful for today?

One of the greatest gifts of being human is the ability to choose what to focus on. If you are perfectly calm and still on the inside, you can handle anything. For those of us without Zen training, the best way you can begin your day is by counting your blessings.

It is the antithesis of a bad-hair day or waking up on the wrong side of the bed. We suggest that whichever side of the bed you have put this journal, it is the right side.

No matter where you are and what your situation is, your focus can be shifted to something positive. Here is how it looks in practice:

I am grateful for...

1. *The warm bed that I sleep in.*
2. *My body that is working in perfect harmony.*
3. *The true and genuine friends in my life.*

OUR SECRET TO THE GRATITUDE LIST

Try writing things you are grateful for that you may not yet have in your life. Let's say you really want to be in a healthy relationship. Then write... *I am grateful to be in a loving, healthy relationship with a partner of my dreams.* Just do not forget to clearly define this person, which is a whole different exercise.

What is Gratitude?

This nifty emotion defies easy classification. Gratitude, derived from the Latin word *gratia* (meaning grace, graciousness or gratefulness) eludes easy explanation by academics. Definitions such as "the willingness to recognize the unearned increments of value in one's experience" look great on term papers but don't get the point across. We will not attempt to disguise imprecision with ten dollar words.

Gratitude is the experience of counting one's blessings.

It is the feeling that embodies the phrase "Thank you". It is the unexpected reward of a kind deed that is magically produced by your brain. It is the cute, tingly feeling in your body that makes you smile at strangers.

Why do scientists love gratitude? Even after cutting through the smoke of Law of Attraction-style belief systems, gratitude has shown to be quite transformative in humans ranging from students to retirees.

A 2003 study by Emmons and McCullough found that keeping a daily gratitude journal leads to better

sleep, reductions of physical pain, a greater sense of well-being, and a better ability to handle change.⁴

Delving deeper into the world of brain science, there's another study that illustrates the immediate effectiveness of gratitude. Turns out, gratitude could be the ultimate magic pill for 'happiness' (drugs notwithstanding).

In a 2008 study, subjects experiencing gratitude were studied under fMRI (*functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging*) and it was found that they were influencing their hypothalamus in real-time.⁵

The hypo-what?

The hypothalamus is the teeny part of your brain that directly influences sleep, eating and stress. Gratitude also stimulates the part of the brain associated with the neurotransmitter dopamine—the 'do it again' chemical—which is responsible for the creation of new learning pathways.

Bottom line: Write in the journal. Every morning and every night—it is the closest thing to a magic pill.

Creating a Better Day

WHAT WOULD MAKE TODAY GREAT?

Have you ever had the experience of buying a new car and seeing the same model everywhere you go?

Or automatically noticing how someone has the same shoes/haircut/shirt? Have you had the experience of falling in love and seeing everything through rose-coloured glasses?

These experiences are universal. Why do they happen?

There is a small part of your brain called the Reticular Activation System (RAS) that turns on and off your perception of ideas and thoughts and determines the lenses through which you look at the world. When you take an action like buy a new car, you have taken a major step in redefining your possessions and your RAS changes to accommodate your new acquisition.

Everywhere you go, your RAS will gently remind you of this change by pointing out others who have the same car as you.

When you write "What would make today great?" you are taking a step to influence your RAS to point out and engage in activities that would make your day better. You are building new pathways in your brain that allow you to 'see' what you can do to improve your well-being every day.

You are creating a new program in your mind that naturally increases your happiness. Doing this consistently gives you consistently better days. It is that simple.

One study found that people who simply thought about watching their favorite funny movie actually increased their endorphin levels (the chemical your brain produces to make you feel happiness and well being) by 27 percent.⁶ The most enjoyable part of an activity is often the anticipation.

To illustrate this with an example, let's introduce you to Katie.

She is an ambitious twenty-something whose favorite part of The Five Minute Journal is 'What would make today great?' because it gives her an

excuse to brainstorm ideas to spice up her day. As soon as she wakes up, she spends an extra minute before writing out this section.

This is what a random day in her journal looks like:

I am grateful for...

1. *Take extra time for myself before leaving work*
2. *Write a thank you note to Mom*
3. *Sleep before 10 PM*

Notice she makes sure she writes down what she has control over. She could write a sunny day; however, she has no control over whether the day would be sunny or not. She focuses on the specific actions she can take in the day to make it great. So, it's your turn now. How could you make today great for you?

Daily Affirmation

A STATEMENT OF WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR LIFE

If you have read this far, chances are you are interested in creating something amazing in your life and you are going to get it. You have ideas about the person you want to be and the future you want to build.

Cut to a study conducted by Dr. Alia Crum and Dr. Ellen Langer from Harvard University where they performed an experiment to study the effect of brain priming on the staff of seven different hotels. Half of the participants were informed about how much exercise they were getting every day through their work—how many calories they burned, how similar vacuuming is to a workout, etc. The other half were given no such information.

Several weeks later, it was found that the first group who had been primed to think of their work as exercise had

actually lost weight. Incredibly, these individuals had not done any more work or exercised any more than the control group (their colleagues who had not been informed about how their work was similar to a workout).⁷

Hence the operative question—how can you prime your brain to cash in on this?

The Daily Affirmation is a simple statement that defines you as you want to be. Every time you write the daily affirmation, you prime your brain to start building this belief in your mind. With consistency, you will begin to create that change from within.

HERE IS HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE.

Let's say Bruce is interested in building his confidence in everyday life. He wakes up in the morning and writes in his journal:

Daily affirmations. I am...

I am confident and comfortable in my own skin.

As he goes about his day, he naturally starts to notice the world from this perspective. Let's say he buys some tea and smiles at the cashier. His subconscious begins to think, "Ah, this must be happening because I am confident and comfortable in my own skin." Every day he writes in The Five Minute Journal, he begins to prime his brain to this belief.

Don't underestimate the effectiveness of this exercise. If Will Smith, Jim Carrey and Arnold Schwarzenegger found value in it, you can too.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS LOOKS IN THE JOURNAL:

Daily affirmations. I am...

I live with passion and purpose.

YOU COULD ALSO GET NICE AND SPECIFIC:

Daily affirmations. I am...

I am in a loving and passionate relationship.

I earn \$100,000/year.

It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.

Muhammad Ali

The Night Routine

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The Amazing Three

WHAT ARE THREE AMAZING THINGS THAT HAPPENED DURING YOUR DAY?

Possibly the best moment in the day is allowing yourself to take inventory of all the positive moments—big and small. The Amazing Three is your personal collection of the expected and unexpected bounty of wonderful things that you experienced in a day.

To illustrate the effectiveness of this one section, we turn to Quora—a social networking website that allows intelligent people around the world to share insights, answers and knowledge.

A question relating to happiness gleaned a powerful response from a social marketer, Brad Einarsen, which was supported by leading psychologists such as BJ Fogg.

"When I was in a dark period, I instituted a simple rule that changed my life.

Rule: When I arrive home from work, the very first thing I tell my wife is the best thing that happened that day.

No exceptions. No complaining. Just the best thing that day, even if it was just a good cup of coffee. This had the effect of starting our evening off on a positive note and it changed our relationship."

BRAD EINARSEN

It can truly change your relationships. When you write The Amazing Three, you count your blessing in the day—in reverse. This has the effect of allowing you to 'prime' your brain in reverse and can change not just your relationships with your loved ones, it can change your relationship with yourself.

FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS OF LISTING YOUR AMAZING THREE, START WITH SOMETHING SIMPLE:

3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. *A friend recommended a wonderful book for me.*
2. *I took a beautiful walk in the park today.*
3. *The barista remembered how I like my Americans.*

Slowly, you will start getting better at this. Through the magic of discipline, the list will start getting better and better. Remember to review The Amazing Three every month to see how you are changing and moving forward.

I, Chloe Moore,
commit to writing The Five Minute Journal for at least 5 days in a row,
starting May 1.

Writing this journal is really important to me because

I am committing to my best life
I want to create more abundance in my life
I need more discipline in my life

If I finish 5 days of writing this journal, I will reward myself with

A ski trip with my significant other.

If I don't finish 5 days of writing this journal, I will promise to

Donate \$100 to a charity I don't support.

I will do the following things to ensure that I do

The Five Minute Journal every day:

Keep my Five Minute Journal right by the bedside
Brush my teeth only after I've done the journal
Set my alarm only after I do my night journal
Share my commitment with someone I love
Sign up for tips at www.journalaholic.com

My Commitment

I, _____,
commit to writing The Five Minute Journal for at least 5 days in a row,
starting _____.

Writing this journal is really important to me because

If I finish 5 days of writing this journal, I will reward myself with

If I don't finish 5 days of writing this journal, I will promise to

I will do the following things to ensure that I do

The Five Minute Journal every day:



*A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue,
but the parent of all the other virtues.*

CICERO

I am grateful for...

1. *The warm bed that I sleep in.* _____
2. *My body that is working in perfect harmony.* _____
3. *The incredible friends in my life.* _____

What would make today great?

1. *Take extra time for myself before leaving work* _____
2. *Write a thank you note to Mom* _____
3. *Sleep before 10 pm* _____

Daily affirmations. I am...

*I am confident and comfortable in my own skin and I live
with passion and purpose.* _____

The Journal

3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. *I remembered to floss.* _____
2. *A friend recommended a wonderful book for me.* _____
3. *I saw a cute stranger at the cafe.* _____

How could I have made today even better?

I wake up right when the alarm goes off. _____
I go to the gym in the morning. _____



DATE ____ / ____ / 20____

*Day by day, what you choose, what you think
and what you do is who you become.*

HERACLITUS

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What would make today great?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daily affirmations. I am...



3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How could I have made today even better?



DATE ____ / ____ / 20____

*Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift.
That's why it is called the present.*

ALICE MORSE EARLE

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What would make today great?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daily affirmations. I am...



3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How could I have made today even better?



DATE ____ / ____ / 20____

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pause today for an extra few moments with each question to really connect with the feeling behind what you write down.

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What would make today great?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daily affirmations. I am...



3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How could I have made today even better?



DATE ____ / ____ / 20____

Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine job into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.

WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What would make today great?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daily affirmations. I am...



3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How could I have made today even better?



DATE ____ / ____ / 20____

*Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more.
If you concentrate on what you don't have,
you will never, ever have enough.*

OPRAH WINFREY

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What would make today great?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daily affirmations. I am...



3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How could I have made today even better?



DATE ____ / ____ / 20____

The measure of success is happiness and peace of mind.

BOBBY DAVRO

I am grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What would make today great?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daily affirmations. I am...



3 Amazing things that happened today...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How could I have made today even better?

In the Full Five Minute Journal

The Five Minute Journal is one of the simplest ways that I have found to consistently ensure improving my well being and happiness. Both in terms of achievement and actual measurable, quantifiable results.

TIM FERRISS, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

- Six months worth of journaling with inspiring quotes and weekly challenges
- Expanded introduction with in-depth explanations how to best use each section of The Five Minute Journal
- Beautiful linen bound hardcover

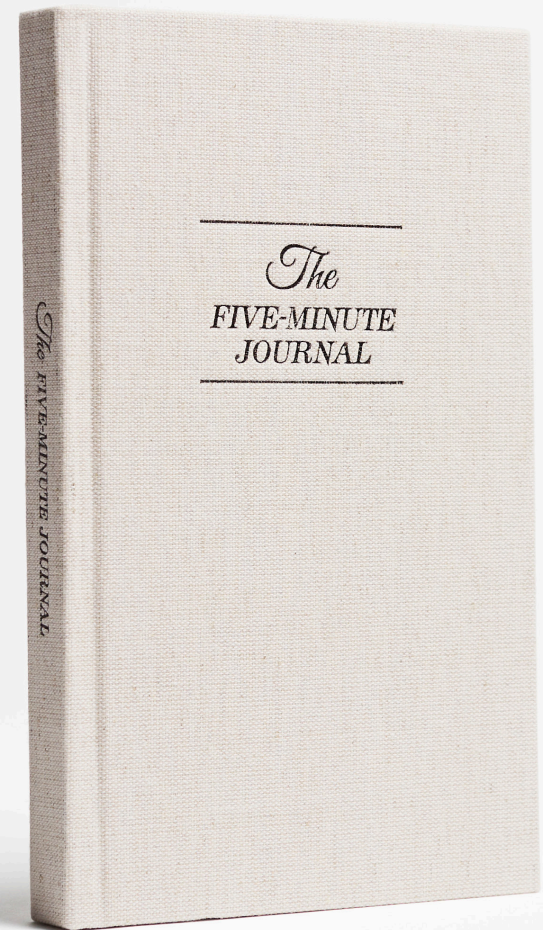
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