

BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



The High 5 Habit

By Mel Robbins

Mel Robbins is one of the leading voices in personal development and transformation and a New York Times Bestselling author. Her groundbreaking work on behavior change has been translated into 36 languages and is used by healthcare professionals, veterans' organizations, and the world's leading brands to inspire people to be more confident, effective, and fulfilled. As one of the most widely booked and followed public speakers in the world, Mel coaches more than 60 million people online every month and videos featuring her work have more than a billion views online, including her TEDx talk, which is one of the most popular of all time.

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Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit

There are plenty of books available today—and by 'plenty' we mean 'thousands'—that claim to offer transformative change with a single, simple adjustment to your daily habits. That 'one small trick' that will make you more productive, happier, healthier, and whatever superlative you want to choose.

With that in mind, it would be understandable to approach the latest in a long line of books of this type with a healthy amount of skepticism. But what if there really were a single habit that had the power to completely change your mindset and the way you approached every day?

Mel Robbins is a bestselling author and leading voice in the area of personal development and transformation. Her TEDx talk is one of the most popular of all time, and her collective videos have amassed over a billion streams. She's previously made publishing waves with her hit book, *The 5 Second Rule*, and is now back with another hit—*The High 5 Habit*. According to Robbins, this new habit of focused self-worth was the key to breaking her out of one of the most difficult periods in her life and showing her a path to undoing self-doubt, jealousy, fear, and feelings of unworthiness. Now, she's put down everything this new habit has taught her—including a guide to making it work for each of us—in this book that's already a bestseller selling thousands of copies worldwide.

At the core of *The High 5 Habit* is the idea that even those of us who are constantly supporting, encouraging, and uplifting others tend to neglect one very important person in our lives when it comes to encouragement—ourselves. Robbins has set out to inspire all of us to give the same love and encouragement to ourselves that we usually reserve to others, and to do it in a formal way that will become an integral part of our day-to-day routine.

So, is *The High 5 Habit* as transformative as thousands of readers are already claiming? Let's explore it in a bit more detail to find out.

What is the High 5 Habit?

One day, Mel Robbins woke up and found herself feeling her worst. In the book's introduction she recounts how her life



leading up to this point had been a whirlwind of unpleasant experiences and feelings. “The stress was nonstop. I’d been so busy taking care of and worrying about everyone and everything else, who was taking care of me?”

That morning, Robbins dragged herself out of bed and into the bathroom, where she caught her reflection in the mirror and found her negative feelings surrounding her recent stress compounded by negative feelings about her own appearance. She started picking apart the things she didn’t like about the way she looked. Soon, she was caught in a spiral.

Then, Robbin did something that changed her mindset. She lifted her hand and met the reflection in the mirror in a self-high five. She didn’t say anything, but she says that she was ‘telling [herself] something she desperately needed to hear.’ She was assuring herself that she could do it, that she could get through this, that she was worth love and self-care and kindness.

She writes about what happened next: “Immediately, I felt my chest loosen, I squared my shoulders, and I cracked a smile at how corny the high five seemed, but suddenly, I didn’t look so tired, I didn’t feel so alone, and that to-do list didn’t seem so daunting. I went on with my day.”

At its most basic, this is exactly what *The High 5 Habit* is. Each morning, Robbins encourages readers to first take a moment to stand in front of the mirror and ‘be with yourself’ for just a second. Don’t focus on your appearance, but rather on who you are as a person. Next, whenever you feel ready, it’s time to give yourself that high-five. It’s simple, it’s quick, and yes, it’s a little bit corny. But it might just be the single most effective habit you pick up this year.

Changing What We See in the Mirror

According to Robbins, one of the core benefits of this habit is that it changes our self-perception first thing in the morning, before we take on the day as the only person we have available to us— ourselves.

The habit itself may be simple, but the science behind it is sound. When we engage in gestures that carry an ingrained positive connotation, it actually changes the way our brain functions. It’s the reason that smiling makes us feel happier, or performing an act of service for someone actually makes us feel more positive feelings towards that person.

The act of the high-five has a long established history in human culture as the most essentially positive physical touch you can give another person. It’s an affirmation, it’s a congratulation, it’s encouragement, all wrapped up into one simple, snappy action. So, when we high-five ourselves, we find it more difficult to feel negative about our appearance, our decisions, and the day we face ahead. Subconsciously, your mind changes its thinking to match the positive physical gesture— making you almost incapable of thinking negatively about yourself.

The morning routine that many of us usually find serving as a chance to ruminate on all of our anxieties and insecurities

suddenly becomes something else. It’s the moment when we encourage, motivate, and inspire ourselves. In Robbins’ words, we begin each day by telling ourselves: “I see you. I believe in you. I am here with you. You got this.”

Soon, we’ll have such a positive association with that moment in the mirror that we’ll actually begin to change what we see when we look at ourselves. We’ll feel good, positive feelings before the moment of the high-five even comes, because our brain will have created a connection between that bathroom moment and all of the encouragement that comes when we get there.

The Comparison Wars

A significant portion of *The High 5 Habit* is centered around jealousy and bitterness. In one of the book’s most poignant sections, Robbins recounts a story about how she let jealousy and bitterness nearly consume her.

“I remember this time when a friend of ours bought a beautiful house and threw a big party to celebrate. Walking in that door, into a home that was five times the size of ours, at a time when we had little kids and could barely pay our mortgage, I thought I was going to self-combust. I was so jealous that I could barely contain it, and I did what many of us do: I aimed it right at my husband. On the ride home, we got into a big fight because I started crying over the fact that “We’d never have a home that nice.”

Whether each of us can point to an example as vivid as that in our own lives, we all struggle with feelings of jealousy. We look at others’ lives and careers and think, Why can’t I have that? Why do they get to have it and I don’t? What did they do to deserve that? When is it going to be my turn?

Quickly, those thoughts turn from jealousy at what we’re missing to resentment of ourselves for our failures. If I worked harder or were smarter, I would have those things. I should be much farther along in my path than I am now. What’s wrong with me?

Robbins evangelizes the power of the High 5 Habit for combatting thoughts and feelings just like these. She also advocates for a more flexible attitude towards the feeling we call jealousy. What makes jealousy damaging, she says, is when we turn it inwards on ourselves and say, So-and-so has X and I’ll never have it because I’m not good enough.

It’s perfectly natural and even healthy, Robbin says, to look at something someone has and think, I want that for myself. As long as we remove the self-limiting thoughts that come next. Instead, we should high-five ourselves and think, Okay, what steps can I take today to get there?

Starting Today, Instead of Tomorrow

In *The High 5 Habit*’s second half, Robbins introduces the concept that she calls Flip It. Like the high 5 habit itself, this concept is simple but surprisingly powerful.

To get an example of it for yourself, think of something that you want to change, try, or do in your life. Then, just as the



The more comfortable we become with unapologetically pursuing our dreams, the closer we'll come to living the life we truly want to live. . . ”

book's namesake habit requires you to physically take an action, you have to say the thing out loud. Whether it's achieving a fitness goal, improving your financial state, or completing a creative endeavor, say the goal out loud to yourself and allow yourself to feel that it is, in fact, possible. Now, think about the biggest limiting belief that's standing in your way. "I'm too out of shape to run a marathon." "I'm in too much debt to start saving." "I'm not a good enough writer to publish a book."

Finally, it's time to Flip It. Robbins says that while the idea of flipping a limited belief into the belief that you really can achieve something is simple, there are some steps that will help you really make that shift.

First, she advocates giving yourself a deadline. Even if the deadline is arbitrary, creating a deadline for yourself means that you're serious and you're not going to let anything stand in your way. It's you telling yourself that you have a time limit, so you'd better start carving out time each day for your goal because soon your time will be up to achieve it.

Next, you have to write your goal down. It can be in a planner, a notebook, on a note you keep by your bedside table, or even—ideally—on your mirror so that it can pair with your daily high-five. Robbins says the importance of this is that it serves as 'evidence' of your goal. "Every time you see a piece of evidence, a sign, a coincidence, or some positive spin on why you should [pursue your goal], I want you to write it down in your notebook."

Robbins tells a powerful story of a cab driver who had dreams of moving to California and pursuing a career as an actor. But his limiting beliefs were tough to overcome, and his timeline was too vague and distant. She encouraged him to stop thinking it was possible, set a goal to move, and then start pretending that the universe was leaving clues everywhere to encourage him to follow his goal. He eventually broke down in tears at having finally unlocked the feeling that his dream was something achievable.

Moving Forward

Near the conclusion of the book, Robbins drops what could be considered a sort of caveat. She lists all of the ways that habit and its surrounding principles can be transformative, encouraging, and positive in your life. She highlights how making choices from a place of self-empowerment and belief rather than doubt and jealousy can unlock potential you didn't know you had. She recounts the ways that the habit has transformed her own life and helped guide her toward greater understanding. But then she says something else— "That doesn't mean it was easy or perfect."

In the end, this is one of the most powerful aspects of Robbins'

approach in *The High 5 Habit*. She has an absolute belief in her habit as a tool, and believes in the power of trusting in that tool for her readers, but she also acknowledges that it won't pave a path with gold towards whatever dreams and goals you may have. She acknowledges that there will be discomfort, though it will be temporary. The more comfortable we become with unapologetically pursuing our dreams, the closer we'll come to living the life we truly want to live, free from self-doubt and self-hatred.

Finally, Robbins leaves us readers with a straightforward daily checklist to put us in the right mindset each morning. Get up when the alarm rings, tell yourself that you are safe and loved, make your bed (a gift to yourself), celebrate yourself with a high-five in the mirror, put on exercise clothes, and set aside time to think about your dreams first thing in the morning before taking on other responsibilities.

Are any of these habits revolutionary? Of course not. Self-affirmation is certainly not a new concept. But together, they add up to a powerful mindset shift that can help just about anyone. "These practices are simple," Robbins says. "But I want you to trust that doing them, one after the other, every morning doesn't just set you up for a better and more productive day. These practices are far more expensive. They will quiet your nervous system, focus your mind, and support you."

Conclusion

Upon reading a summary of *The High 5 Habit*, one might be prompted to wonder— Do I really need to read an entire book about high-fiving myself in the mirror every morning? Even the author acknowledges just how simple the habit is on its surface.

However, the book is packed with insights, anecdotes, inspiration, and direction that add up to be a meaningful and genuinely helpful guide to everything the habit itself represents. The ultimate benefit is that by the end, you'll hopefully start thinking of yourself the way Mel Robbins thinks of all her readers— someone whose dreams are worth following and whose capabilities mean those dreams are always within reach.