

# The 5AM CLUB (2018) – Own your morning, elevate your life by Robin Sharma

Karpagam R, Periyasamy M  
*Mailam Engineering College, Mailam*

**Abstract-**This paper explores the importance of streamlining morning rituals for human beings to elevate their life in a most beneficial way. The story was narrated in a realistic way wherein three individuals, unknown strangers who meet for the first time in their life as a result of attending a personal optimization conference. Given the dynamics of life, job, socio-economic pressure, uncontrolled digital distraction, humans who have huge potential to become something extra-ordinary are still lost in a quagmire, anarchic stage of hopelessness at times and really struggle to become stellar performers. This story revolves around an Entrepreneur, an Artist, and homeless man looking tycoon in the beginning and a spellbinder at brief moments. Some of the writings, suggestions and recommendations by the author had been deep-rooted in our culture however it had been ignored at a larger scale and that's why there is a lack-luster attitude towards achieving greater success in life. For instance, early to bed and early to rise has been taught to most in most of the cultures in the world however it was knowingly and unknowingly ignored and hence there are poor ramifications to us. Another aspect of my analysis is to explore why these methods, techniques, tips fail to succeed in many of aspiring life-changers life, what truly contributes to lack-luster performance of an individual as opposed to stellar performance, how does our brain reacts to both these circumstances and how to mitigate them.

**Keywords:** Robin Sharma, 5AC, The 5AM Club, Elevate Your Life, self-help, Motivational

## INTRODUCTION

The story begins with an entrepreneur, who had abundant success in her past but been beaten up by a mean-spirited and jealously-fueled coup attempting to dilute her ownership stake in her business and demanding her to quit the job. With no ray of hopes, she's in a limbo to swallow sleeping pills to attain a quick death or to attend a motivational speaker's seminar for which the ticket was gifted to her by her mother. Although she had laughed at pseudo guru seeking people in the past and called them as "Broken

winged", she had decided to pursue this time, hoping for a breakthrough and a returned fortune. Another character being an artist who was broken without being successful in his career and were unable to create something masterful was hoping for a miracle to happen, similar to a Black Swan theory\*. This book illustrates the importance of being a master in what we do, how to accommodate grand scheme of things with the given time of the day, focus techniques such as TBTF (Tight Bubble of Total Focus, etc.), lay down foundations for a successful life by instilling the lessons, poems, quotes from famed personalities, celebrities in the past in the words of the spellbinder and a business tycoon.

## Chapter(s) Discussion:

Letting go of mediocrity and all that's ordinary:

In the chapter-4 the author emphasizes on ways to boost your self-esteem when he writes that the tycoon learned the importance of being around only the highest quality, wherever he goes and that one cannot run a A-Level company with C-level employees, he prefers to eat only the best food without binge-eating them, reads only original and thoughtful books, only surrounds with people who fuel their joy, etc. The fact is the ambience, surroundings and circumstances really do shape our perceptions, inspirations, rationale, moral values and our implementations. Also a beautiful art and music would feed our souls, great books would stand as a bulletproof our hope, healthy-rich conversations would magnify our creativity, perceptions and beautiful sight would fortify our spirit.

To elucidate the importance of rising early (mother of all routines such as exercise, meditate, visualize, journal, etc.) daily, consistently which attributes to better health, taking control of your life and elevate your life, the author refers to Norman Cousins's quote "The tragedy of life is not death but what we let die

inside of us while we live”. I would like to quote how certain insights have influenced my thinking, perception such as the content in this book and also on few other books. What determines success? Although there are several answers to it in various books, I read that FOCUS determines success (The art of the Good Life\*) and the same focus has been emphasized in this book when the author says TBTF (Tight Bubble of Total Focus) and attain micro-wins on a specific task. In the book Thirukkural\* (a Tamil book, English couplet-595), it states that with rising flood the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds; the dignity of men is measured by their minds. The stalks of water-flowers are proportionate to the depth of water; so is men's greatness proportionate to their minds. These 2 lines pretty much summarize the above points that a man with best faculties will be extra-ordinary aligning with the current book (The 5AM Club).

A Flight to Peak Productivity, Virtuosity and Undefeatability:

In Chapter-6, the author presents the 5 rules to understand the world better and helps us to perceive it in a more realistic way.

Rule #1: *An addiction to distraction is the end of your creative production. Empire-makers and history-creators take one hour for themselves before dawn in the serenity.* This habit would declutter your thoughts, calms your mind and prepare us for a world-class day.

Rule #2: *Excuses breeds no genius.* The author talks about better late than never ideology. It is important for anyone to release their rationalizations and remember that small improvements, micro-wins will go a long way. Life is a Marathon and not a sprint when it comes to a successful, satisfied accomplishments in the long run.

Rule #3: *All change is hard at first, messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end.* Here the author illustrates that with consistent and conscientious effort on waking up with the sun will become your new normal and automatic.

Rule #4: *To have the results The Top 5% of producers have, you must start doing what 95% of people are unwilling to do.* The author re-emphasize the fact that the hours 95% waste the Top 5% treasure. 5AM is the

time of least distraction, highest human glory and greatest peace to be leveraged.

Rule #5: When you feel like surrendering, continue. Triumph loves the relentless.

With these rules, the author challenges the belief system such as geniuses are born and not developed. I think it is debatable and have proven in many occurrences in the past such as Michael Angelo has been painting for years, experimenting with several palettes, patterns before he became a famed painter. Charles Darwin spent 7 years on studying geese and other waterfowl species and waited almost 20 years voyage and studying more before publishing his work (The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection in 1859, Darwinism\*). Michael Jordan had missed more than 9000 shots during his practice before he became a legend. Such records in history illustrates that geniuses can be developed too.

The 4 Focuses of History-Makers:

In Chapter-10, the author starts with a quote from Cicero “The life given us, by nature is short. But the memory of a well-spent life is eternal” and provides details on how the brain works behind the successful morning routine (Transient Hypofrontality). As you enter into the morning flow state, the pre-frontal cortex of your brain quiets (access to genius level insights, advanced creativity and world-class performance). A pharmacy of mastery is stimulated in your brain which supercharges it by decreasing CORTISOL (stress-hormone), rising DOPAMINE (happy-hormone) and soaring SEROTONIN levels. Ultimately brain waves change from BETA -> ALPHA -> THETA ensuring solitude, stillness and silence. The flow state is the peak mindset that all exceptionalists like top violinists, iconic, athletes, elite chefs, brilliant scientists, empire-building entrepreneurs and legendary leaders inhabit when they produce their finest products. The author also talks about the interior empires such as MINDSET (Psychology), HEARTSET (Emotionality), HEALTHSET (Physicality) and SOULSET (Spirituality).

It is very nature of any being to be in a healthy state to deliver the best regardless of what they do. One of the point that I'd like to analyze is how to address the inequality paradigm. For instance, if someone doesn't

happen to have finer things in life to try all those methodology prescribed in this book is to understand that Rome wasn't built in a day and it takes weeks, months and years depending upon other socio-economic factors and ready to endure, navigate the tides of life also to attain the extra-ordinary success.

True Grit:

The term grit was popularized by social psychologist Angela Duckworth, who studied elite performers in the fields of business, education, the military and sports. She found that what makes the most successful achievers so great isn't their inherent talent but their levels of commitment, discipline, resilience and perseverance. The tycoon and the entrepreneur symbolizes true grit on many occasions throughout the book, it is the moment that you face your deepest weakness that you receive the chance to forge your greatest strengths. Real power comes not from a life of ease but one of intense effort, devoted discipline and demanding action in the direction of what your supreme self knows to be right.

To persist in the instant when you feel like giving up is key to combat the boredom, monotonous, lack-luster mindset of losing. This way we can let ourselves in the winner's forte, remember there isn't any competition at the extra-ordinary level but there are at ordinary levels and it is applicable in many fields and aspects. Also, the author discusses some scientific truths behind excellent habits such as

- World-class willpower isn't an inborn strength, but a skill developed through relentless practice. This reminds a saying of whatever you practice in private is precisely the way you'll perform once you're in public.
- Personal discipline is a muscle. The more you stretch it, the stronger it grows.
- Like other muscles, willpower weakens when tired. Recovery is, therefore, absolutely necessary for the expression of mastery.
- Increasing self-control in one area of your life elevates self-control in all areas of your life.

Generally speaking, I would take the author's view point that geniuses aren't inborn rather they are self-trained or trained by someone else, hone their skills and master them to the greatest level possible.

Habits Installation:

Unlike the notion that 21 days of a thing to be habit, it is 66 days to be more robust. The habit installation protocol is broken down to 3 stages (stage-1 is 22 days destruction phase, stage-2 is 22 days installation phase and the final 22 days of stage-3, integration). In chapter 13, the author speaks about several strategies, 20/20/20 formula, benefits, deconstructing them and how someone who follows could widely gain control of self, surroundings, goals and hence the greater accomplishment. As we move, exercise in the morning, getting the brain to know that we are awake, sweat hard, trigger the positive hormone (serotonin), hydrate, controls or cleanses cortisol, BDNF-brain derived neurotrophic factor flows which is released by our body as a result of a powerful workout, more focus and productivity, energy grows, less stress and live longer. In chapter 14, the author talks about essentialness of sleep which in turn streamlines the body, brain, circadian rhythm, builds HGH (Human Growth Hormones produced in the pituitary gland of the brain and is important for healthy tissues in your body, a strong functioning metabolism and a long lifespan). And in the next chapter he reveals the tactics of lifelong genius summarizing all the techniques, strategies, etc.

1. TBTF (Tight Bubble of Total Focus)
2. The 90/90/1 rule
3. 60/10 method
4. The Daily 5 concept
5. The Second wind workout
6. The 2 Massage Protocol to alleviate stress
7. Traffic University
8. The Dream Team Technique
9. The Weekly Design System
10. The 60 minute student

For instance, TBTF, 90/90/1 and 60/10 methods help to regain your time and primal brilliance by focusing in solitude without any digital interruptions which is costing you your fortune – financially, cognitively, energetically, physically and spiritually. Anything negative, toxic and impure gets blocked at the gate. Essentially, this way of being in the world is your bulletproof defense system to reject any stimuli that would decry your greatness. As a pleasant surprise, the author talks about the 2M Protocol, which has been scientifically proven, studies have demonstrated that

massage therapy is a modality that generates significant improvements in brain performances, mood, your ability to fight stress, and in terms of your general wellness. Cortisol (fear-hormone) is reduced by 31%, dopamine is increased by 31% and serotonin is elevated by 28% and reduced muscle tension. In relation to participating in Traffic University is all about leveraging travelling time – whether to and from work or grocery shopping and errand running – to learn, expanding your professional prowess and personal knowledge. Specific ideas to help you do so include listening to audio books and consuming valuable podcasts. In dream team technique, the author elucidates the importance of visualization of your tasks upfront with an example of how high-performing athletes visualize their game prior to entering the stadium. In my honest opinion, this technique is very powerful in my own experience such as what my plans in a day, how do I run through a presentation for a class, etc. Also there are several studies supplementing this fact as useful and powerful. In addition, the author talks about maxims such as

Maxim #1: To create a magic in the world – Own the magic within yourself which reminds me of a quote from a French mathematician Blaise Pascal “All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone”.

Maxim #2: Create miraculous experiences over material things.

Maxim #3: Failure inflates Fearlessness. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default” J.K. Rowling.

Maxim #4: Proper use of your primal power creates your personal utopia. Here the point that the author is making is that humans rationalize the fact they have betrayed their dreams, neglected their human treasures while they are more capable of evolving into more.

Maxim #5: Avoid energy draining companions, people to be peaceful and successful.

Maxim #6: Money is the fruit of Generosity, Not Scarcity.

Maxim #7: Optimal Health maximizes your power to produce magic.

Maxim #8: Continue raising your life standards toward absolute world-class

Maxim #9: Deep Love yields unconquerable joy.

Maxim #10: Heaven on earth is a state, not a place.

Maxim #11: Tomorrow is a Bonus, not a right.

In my humble opinion, In the midst of fast-paced world, life’s dynamics, there are several factors attribute to one’s success or failure. Speaking of factors related to not achieving an extra-ordinary life or successful career, relationship, self-satisfaction were fear of failure(s), lack of calibrating the time it takes to achieve a goal, financial illiteracy\*, lack of understanding how our brain cells work, etc. For instance if an artist who is unsuccessful so far, who ends up working as something else than being in art related job would need financial independence to focus on what he/she needs to do. This is where the financial literacy comes into play. Although history, sociology, math, science and language were taught at schools, which is very important invariably, there has to be a subject on financial literacy which would teach any student on how to attain financial independence and parallel focus on other goals on career, relationships, etc. One of our primal fears of humans being ways to survive, succumb to social/peer pressure which would derail their focus on understanding the fundamentals of what a circadian rhythm is, how it works, how to streamline them to work for our goals, etc. There is no such night owls in our ancestor’s period unless there is a survival necessity temporarily. As a result of social media distraction, the circadian rhythm\* is disrupted and if someone who wants to try the implementation techniques in this book (The 5AM CLUB) without understanding the dynamics of how a sleep cycle can be adjusted, he/she would face hiccups and bumps on the initial few attempts and might get demotivated. The result is their precious reservoirs of hope fades and it is back to square one.

## CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, I would like to start with the quote from Spartan warrior credo “One who sweats more in training bleeds less in war”. Patience is the virtue,

break down large chunk (task) into smaller ones, focus on completing the task thoroughly and the time will be managed and falls into place resulting in micro wins as recommended by the author. Also determining MINS (Most Important Next Step) for every task is essential to its success. The way to annihilate the weakest impulses of your lower self and to free yourself of the cravings and temptations that are blocking your best is through ceaseless repetition of the new behavior you're working hard to install. Steadfast.

#### REFERENCE

- [1] \*Black Swan Theory: The theory was developed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (Book: The Black Swan 2007) to explain:
  - The disproportionate role of high-profile, hard-to-predict, and rare events that are beyond the realm of normal expectations in history, science, finance, and technology.
  - The non-computability of the probability of the consequential rare events using scientific methods (owing to the very nature of small probabilities).
  - The psychological biases that blind people, both individually and collectively, to uncertainty and to a rare event's massive role in historical affairs.
- [2] \*Book: The art of the Good Life by Rolf Dobelli is a toolkit designed for practical living. Here you'll find 52 happiness hacks - from guilt-free shunning of technology to gleefully paying your parking tickets - that are certain to optimize your happiness.
- [3] \*Thirukkural by Thiruvalluvar is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets of seven words each, or Kurals. The text is divided into three books, each with aphoristic teachings on virtue (Aram, dharma), wealth (dharma) and love (kama). Considered one of the greatest works on ethics and morality, it is known for its universality and secular nature. Its authorship is traditionally attributed to Valluvar, also known in full as Thiruvalluvar. The text has been dated variously from 300 BCE to 5th century CE.
- [4] \*Financial Literacy: Sourced from the book (Rich Dad Poor Dad by Robert Kiyosaki).
- [5] \*Circadian rhythm: It's a natural, internal process that regulates the sleep-wake cycle and repeats roughly every 24 hours. It can refer to any biological process that displays an endogenous, entrainable oscillation of about 24 hours. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circadian\\_rhythm#:~:text=A%20circadian%20rhythm%20is%20a,oscillation%20of%20about%2024%20hours](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circadian_rhythm#:~:text=A%20circadian%20rhythm%20is%20a,oscillation%20of%20about%2024%20hours).
- [6] \*Darwinism, Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and others, stating that all species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual's ability to compete, survive, and reproduce. Sourced from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-evolution-of-charles-darwin-110234034/>