



12 MINUTES TO STSQ

Shattering the status quo is about standing out. It is about going against the grain and pushing limits and boundaries every day, in everything you do. Our mission at Mediaspace Solutions is to shatter the status quo. We have created this series to showcase how individuals have done this throughout their personal and professional lives to arrive where they are today.

UJ Ramdas is the co-founder at Intelligent Change Inc. and co-author of The Five Minute Journal. UJ is passionate about bringing together practical psychology and business to create a better world. With a background in behavioral science, marketing and hypnosis, he's consulted with several hundred clients, bringing them from confusion to clarity. Currently based out of Toronto, Canada, he's a big fan of the wilderness, eastern meditative practices and a good cup of tea.

CAN YOU GIVE US A BRIEF SUMMARY OF YOUR EXPERIENCE AT INTELLIGENT CHANGE AND YOUR CAREER BACKGROUND?

The Five Minute Journal is the first product that we created here at Intelligent Change. The basic premise at the company is to create cool products for self-starters. I have a background in behavioral science and marketing. My friend Alex Ikonn, who I partnered with on Intelligent Change, runs a successful ecommerce business by leveraging YouTube videos. I had my hands in a few companies before Intelligent Change. I helped people change their behavior at a clinic and also did marketing for them. I did lead generation as well as and was involved in an SEO company and a digital indoor advertising company.

TELL US ABOUT THE FIVE MINUTE JOURNAL AND HOW IT CAME TO BE.

The Five Minute Journal is a simple product and the premise is it makes you happier in five minutes today. We have research from the world of psychology that tells us what we need to do to be happier from a psychological perspective. There is research on gratitude. There is research on different parts of the brain and the importance of deep emotional bonds. Unless there's a clear system for implementing that research, we don't really get around to doing it.

How the journal came to be is a pretty interesting story. I was taking a walk with a good friend of mine, Alex, who I mentioned previously. We were talking about life, business,

morning routines and night routines. He was explaining to me his specific morning routine. I said, "Well, do you have a night routine?" He said, "No." I proceeded to explain to him what my night routine looked like. It was The Five Minute Journal so I've been doing The Five Minute Journal for five or six years now every night before I go to bed.



He said, "This is actually a really cool idea. How about we create this journal for people to do in the morning and at night?" After a little back and forth I said, "You know what, this is a great idea." We got started that day. It was very unexpected. Ideas do come to you when you're taking a walk in the park.

WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM THOSE WHO HAVE PURCHASED THE FIVE MINUTE JOURNAL?

We've been pretty fortunate because we've gotten that journal into some pretty influential hands, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. We've been featured in several online publications; we have several bloggers promoting us. We were recently featured in Tim Ferriss' Quarterly. A bunch of clients and companies are reaching out to us for holiday and Christmas presents. We're looking at a few minor changes for future editions, and we might come up with an edition for

Did you know?

STSQ = Shatter the Status Quo – the mantra of Mediaspace Solutions employees and what we set out to do every day for each and every client.



teams, an iconic version and an app version. There's a lot going on here.

DO YOU CARE TO SHARE THE NAMES OF THOSE INFLUENTIAL HANDS?

Ben Greenfield, Tim Ferriss, Dave Asprey, Joe Polish and Jayson Gaignard. There are a few people with dedicated audiences that love our product, and we're really pleased about that.

THAT'S GREAT. WHO WERE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST MENTORS AND WHAT DID THEY MEAN TO YOU OR SHOW YOU?

I'm a fan of virtual mentors. This is again a concept that my business partner came up with. You read people's books, listen to their talks, watch their videos and really absorb a lot of their lessons and their world views. Sometimes you can learn a lot about someone just by reading their writing. I'm a fan of Tim Ferriss so we were pleased when he picked up The Five Minute Journal.

I'm also a fan of Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal. He created Thiel Fellowship which gives 20 entrepreneurs \$100,000 to drop out of school and pursue their business, which I think is a brilliant idea. I'm also a fan of people who are no longer living. Buckminster Fuller was a genius who lived in the middle of the 19th Century. I'm a fan of the habits of Da Vinci. There is a lot we can learn from these people who ran the earth and really changed an era. I try to read as much as possible about them. Lastly, I'm a fan of Henry Thoreau because I love nature.

IS THERE SOMETHING SPECIFIC ABOUT THE FIVE MINUTE TIME FRAME THAT YOU THINK MAKES IT IMPACTFUL?

The main thing it does is take away the excuse "I don't have time." You do it as soon as you wake up in the morning and you do The Five Minute Journal right before you go to bed. I'll quickly explain the format of The Five Minute Journal. It's a simple book that you keep by your bedside. When you open it in the morning, the first question you ask yourself is, "What am I grateful for right now?" The second question you ask yourself is, "What actions can I take to make today great?" The third question is, "What kind of a person do I want to be today?" and "What's my affirmation today?"

That's how you start the day and it literally takes about three minutes to answer those questions. At night you ask yourself two questions. Right before you go to bed, you take a pen and ask yourself, "What are three amazing things that happened today?" A lot of the time they tend to be small, seemingly insignificant things. If you really dig down deep and look for those moments, you find the day seems more memorable than you thought it was. Finally you say, "If I were to do this day differently, how could I have made it better?" That's it.

Doing The Five Minute Journal and keeping yourself strictly to a five minute timeframe actually allows you to do it every day. A lot of people have said, "Oh, I know I should journal, but I just don't have time for it." The Five Minute Journal takes away the excuse. This journal was built for people who don't journal, if that makes any sense.

We've taken the research from years of positive psychology and condensed it into about 50 to 60 pages in the very beginning. It gives people a sense of how to do it and the science behind it. Every day when they're doing it, they not only know from personal experience the benefits they're getting, but they know the scientific proof of how it actually works.

WHAT IS ONE WAY INTELLIGENT CHANGE IS MAKING OR BREAKING THE RULES INSTEAD OF JUST ABIDING BY THE RULES?

I'm not a fan of rules to begin with, so this one comes naturally to me. We've spent zero dollars marketing The Five Minute Journal. I think it's really important to get the product into as many hands as possible, and we made some marketing decisions early. We considered a crowdfunding campaign. We considered creating a video, but one of the most important features is to focus on getting the product into as many awesome hands as possible. It's the people who are really behind the product. Unless you have a wow effect, you don't have a business. Kevin Kelly wrote an article called 'A Thousand

True Fans' and mentions a similar concept where if you have a thousand influential, cool and enthusiastic people behind your brand, then you have a business. With The Five Minute Journal we basically bootstrapped everything. No publicity firm, no marketing ploy. We just focused on that and that alone and so far so good.

AS AN ENTREPRENEUR, HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS TO COME UP WITH INNOVATIVE IDEAS?

I interviewed James Altucher who has a very interesting and informative blog (www.jamesaltucher.com). He's got a really good idea that I've stolen called 'Building Your Idea Muscle.' I think it's just a matter of scheduling it and making it a habit. I think as entrepreneurs, ideas are the lifeblood of business and doing it as part of your morning routine is ideal.

If you are churning out 10 to 30 ideas a day, most of them are going to be pretty nonsense, but that's just part of what ideas are. You're just looking for the one in a hundred, one in a thousand that's really going to make all the difference. If you prime your brand, going back to that psychological concept of practicing something over and over and over again and sharpening your mind every time, within a few months you'll find yourself coming up with ideas naturally, even at times when you're not practicing it. If you can make it a habit, it's the best thing.

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Did you know?

At Mediaspace Solutions our core values are: Aggressive, Fun, Innovative, Results-driven and Excellence, which we've coined AFIRE.



OUTSIDE OF THOSE FIVE MINUTES, WHAT'S THE REST OF THE FIRST HOUR OF YOUR DAY LOOK LIKE?

That's a great question. A friend of mine Ameer Rosic, recommends drinking water with a pinch of baking soda, half a teaspoon of sea salt and a full lemon. It's supposed to be great for the adrenals. It's just a great start to my day. Then I immediately think of all the things I'm really grateful for. It's just a routine now. I do The Five Minute Journal, put on my clothes and just go out. I either take a walk or run, depending on the day and how I'm feeling, and then I think of everything that's good in my life. There's a very specific way of breathing. That walk could be anywhere between 15 to 20 minutes. Then I shower, meditate and do some idea generation. I do the important heavy cognitive stuff early and then get to email and Facebook. It's probably more like an hour-and-a-half to two hours before I actually start working on email, Facebook and business stuff. That's the advantage of not having kids right now.

HOW DO YOU UNPLUG?

I'm a fan of Dan Sullivan's work where he talks about free days, focus days and buffer days. Every Sunday I do no work whatsoever. This is the part that needs to happen because my work requires me to be on the computer for a significant amount of the day. I find it really helpful to not check email or be on a computer for a full 24 hours. Not doing something is just as important as doing something.

I love nature. I love to hike. I like to get out of the city often. I really like music and karaoke. I like to spend time with friends, but a lot of my friends are entrepreneurs so it's tough not to talk business when we're hanging out, but it's fun. On the focus days you're just crushing it. You're basically maxing yourself out. I'm a fan of working out, specifically lifting. It not only helps me unplug, but also helps me stay more productive.

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WHAT'S YOUR SIGNATURE SONG WHEN YOU'RE SINGING KARAOKE?

It depends. I listen to classic rock. I'm a fan of 'Jump' by Van Halen and 'Alive' by Pearl Jam.

DO YOU HAVE ANOTHER BOOK ON THE HORIZON? WHAT'S NEXT FOR INTELLIGENT CHANGE?

We're looking at other editions. We're looking at not only a few tweaks in the current journal, but we've had feedback in terms of creating a journal for teens and kids. We've had requests for holiday gifts from companies looking to buy in bulk. For some, we're actually thinking of customizing the entire journal and putting their company logo on it. Holiday time is a busy time because many people think the journal is a great gift. We're working with developers and designers on an app, but it's still on the early stages.

In terms of a new book, I know we will come up with different editions, but we don't have a great idea for a different book just yet. We're presently focusing on getting the message out to as many people as possible and having people experience what it is like to do this stuff for five minutes a day and see the difference it's making.

Did you know?

You can keep up with Mediaspace Solutions on all the major social networking sites including Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Twitter.