

Simi Rayat

PSYCHOLOGIST

Productivity

JOY



Feel Energised

and Be Effective in

5 Minutes a Day



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A must-read – Simi’s evidence-based 5Qs Formula helps transform busy professionals, helping you achieve more of what matters, with more joy!

Shadé Zahrai, co-founder of Influenceo Global and Peak Performance Educator for Fortune 500s

Simi touches the human soul and heart without any judgement. Her 5Q approach is simple and practical and helps you design your day for impact and joy.

Elif Kaypak, VP Global Marketing, Coca-Cola Brand

An easy to follow, well written, helpful and practical guide for self-awareness and improvement. In 5 minutes each morning Simi’s 5Qs Formula has the potential to change your life, bringing you more joy and fulfilment in all aspects of your life.

Aylin Bagdadi, General Manager Community Development & Partnerships, Western United FC

A fantastic tool for any busy professional looking to optimise their experience of, and output from, their working life. I have found the simple and pragmatic framework invaluable in helping me to continue to become the professional, leader, and person I aspire to be.

Chris Jewel-Clark, Legal and General PLC

Productivity Joy will inspire and empower you to unlock your full potential. Simi’s 5Qs Formula is a game-changer. I wholeheartedly recommend *Productivity Joy* to anyone looking to transform their mindset and embrace a more productive, joyful existence.

Emma McQueen, Business Coach

In the midst of a staggering rise in burnout globally, Simi Rayat has written a compelling guide with *Productivity Joy*. While most begin their day by reaching for their phone, inundated with negative news, the 5Qs Formula offers a crucial hack. It is an effective, important, and highly enjoyable book.

Sophie Krantz, Global Strategist

Simi Rayat's 5Qs formula has been a game-changer for me, helping me create a clear path to my goals and unlock my strengths. With its practical and inspiring approach, this book has become my go-to guide for daily motivation and focus.

Teg Sethi, General Manager, Endoca AU

Joy and Productivity! Two core elements to doing work we love. When everything we do becomes a labour of love, it doesn't feel like work.

Matt Church, founder, Thought Leaders

In a world where leaders are stressed, overworked, and struggling, this book offers a clear pathway to becoming a more present, resilient, and empathetic leader. After using the 5Qs Formula for just the past two weeks, I can testify that the clarity of purpose it provided was unlike anything I have experienced!

**Ajit Dodani, Empathy Strategist©,
founder and CEO, EmpathifyU**

In today's busy world, finding balance is extremely important, but becoming exceedingly difficult. Simi's 5Qs approach provides an easy but deliberate way to find this balance and set the foundations for success each day.

**Abhineet Singh Lekhi,
Senior Business Leader**

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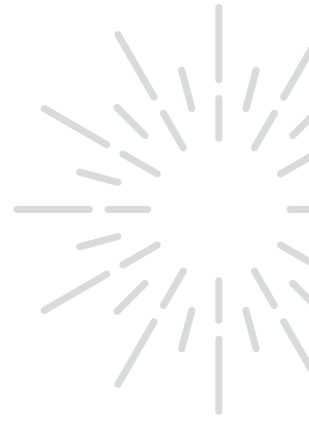
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*When you make people feel they matter, we all achieve
extraordinary things.*

*I'm sincerely grateful to all those who have made me feel that
I matter, and have made me feel seen, heard and valued.*



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A huge thank you to *you* for picking up this book.

Stay in touch at www.simirayat.com.



About the author

Simi Rayat is a chartered organisational psychologist renowned as a leading executive leadership coach and keynote speaker based in Australia. With over two decades of expertise in leadership development, coaching, entrepreneurship and fostering inclusive cultures, Simi is the founder of SimiRayat.com, a thriving psychology consulting and coaching practice. Passionate (some would argue obsessed) and dedicated, Simi transforms leaders into ones who are a joy to work for and do business with, helping them to develop their emotional intelligence to drive better results, relationships and revenue. As a result, these leaders inspire people to give their best and achieve extraordinary feats because they feel seen, heard and valued in their presence.

Having worked and lived across the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, Simi serves a global clientele of leaders including those who work for Fortune 500 companies, multinational financial and professional services firms and public sector organisations, alongside accelerating scale-ups in Australia. Her profound ability to forge deep connections, empathise and guide individuals and teams towards transformation sets her apart. Simi's authentic approach fosters an environment where even the most seasoned or less self-aware

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clients feel comfortable and safe in dropping their guard, opening up and experiencing unparalleled transformation.

Beyond her professional pursuits, Simi finds fulfilment in her roles as a devoted wife and mother to two young boys. She loves to share many moments of laughter, enjoys being close to the water, indulging in wholesome cuisine and nurturing meaningful relationships with family and friends.



Preface

Are you surviving or thriving? Are you truly living life, personally and professionally, or are you constantly greasing the wheels, feeling like you are rushing from one thing to the next?

I vividly remember waking up one cold Saturday morning in autumn in our two-bedroom flat in Chiswick, London. As I approached the window and pulled back the blind, a thin film of water obscured my view of the usually bustling high street below. Wiping away a patch of condensation with my hand, I couldn't shake the feeling of tightness in my throat—a familiar sensation of fear creeping in.

I knew what I feared, yet I hesitated to confront it. The answer to this question is what I truly feared: was I genuinely living, or was I merely surviving?

Despite the outward appearance of success—a thriving business, a supportive husband and two wonderful children—I felt an almost constant sense of unrest within me. My inner turmoil had begun to seep into various aspects of my life, even earning me the nickname 'the bull' from my immediate family. While they would tease me with this name as I'd enter the room, it was a painful reminder for me of my reactive nature and this dark shadow of energy I was

carrying during this phase of my life, in my mid-30s. Even though I was a practising psychologist, I was neglecting my own wellbeing. I was failing to practise what I preached to others.

Somewhere along the way, in the midst of major life transitions (migrating countries three times, getting married, growing and selling my first business, becoming a mother...), I had lost myself. Born in the early 1980s in Leeds, Yorkshire, in the United Kingdom, I enjoyed a childhood filled with love and care from both my immediate and extended family. At five years old, my family and I moved to a small village on the outskirts of Leeds, where my father had secured a teaching role. Most of the village had heard of us, ‘the Indian family’, before we had even got to know or meet them. I was the only Indian girl in my primary and later high school. No-one else looked like me.

Shortly after moving in, we learned that a few villagers had started a petition against us moving there due to our ethnicity. Thankfully, not many people signed the petition. Though my parents shielded my brother and me from most discussions, I clearly recall an overwhelming desire to belong and be accepted in our new community. I wanted to matter, and to feel valued and recognised.

Despite the initial adversity, my family quickly integrated into the neighbourhood, and I look back on my upbringing with overall happiness and positivity. From an early age, I discovered joy in reading books. Looking back, and after exploring psychological research on empathy development and its connection to reading fiction, I realised that this is where my strength of empathy began to form, and also my interest in what others were thinking and feeling.

At age 16, I became fascinated by the field of personal and professional development when I discovered Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Inspired by the transformative insights of

this book, I became determined to pursue my passion for personal development, which was quite different from what I was learning at school. I convinced my parents to let me leave school to start my first job—as a customer service assistant at Halifax Bank. Interacting with customers, especially the elderly, taught me the actual value of empathy, meaningful interactions and strong leadership.

Sparked by these learnings, I returned to education, to study business management and psychology. Guided by inspiring teachers, I pursued internships and a degree in organisational psychology and management at the University of Leeds. I secured an internship with a Canadian leadership consultancy and saw the reality of building a career in my area of passion. I knew firmly that I wanted to pursue a career where I could grow myself, in order to help others to grow. I then completed a master's in organisational psychology at Nottingham University.

A pivotal moment arose when I met my now-husband Harvin. Together, we made the life-altering decision to migrate to Australia, leaving behind everything and everyone I knew in the United Kingdom. While I seemed to adapt outwardly to this move, internally I grappled with profound loneliness and a sense of disconnection, longing for the familiar comforts of home. Nonetheless, I secured a role with a leading management consulting firm and, over time, forged meaningful friendships and relationships, gradually feeling more settled in Australia.

The birth of my son, however, ignited a longing for a deeper sense of belonging, prompting mine and Harvin's decision to return to live in the United Kingdom. In the middle of all these life changes, we experienced a few challenges in our marriage and sought couples counselling. As a psychologist, I was accustomed to delving into the lives of others, offering empathy and support, yet sharing my own personal experiences felt unfamiliar and unsettling, and it took

me a while to lean into the spirit of the counselling support. Being vulnerable and open to receiving support was not something I had done before, and I knew I needed to work on this.

Being back in London, and now with our second child, grounded our family, connected us, and allowed us to explore parts of Europe. However, my entrepreneurial drive remained steadfast. In 2018, I left my corporate role and founded my current business, SimiRayat.com. I worked with leaders and teams across the United Kingdom and Europe to enhance leadership impact, wellbeing and inclusion.

Through all of this outward success, and even when witnessing my clients' transformative growth brought immense satisfaction, I couldn't shake a sense of personal incompleteness and disappointment. I had hindered my own progress and fallen short of my fullest potential. I knew I had failed to achieve the level of progress I had expected for myself at the stage of life I was in. I had neglected to nurture and practise self-development, especially through the significant transitions I had experienced in my own life.

As I stood there at the window, facing my own internal battles, deep down, I knew I needed to change. I had to face the truth—I was merely surviving when all I truly desired was to thrive. I yearned to feel fully present and connected, to achieve all my goals, and to be the most impactful version of myself. My aspiration extended beyond fulfilling my own potential; I yearned to empower others to do the same, to live life to its fullest, because I knew, deep down, this could be truly possible. Yet, I understood the paradox: how could I truly help optimise others when I knew I hadn't fully optimised myself yet?



Introduction

Do you feel like no matter how much you do, there is always so much more to do? Do you feel like it's only a matter of time before you drop one of the balls and forget something or let yourself or someone else down? Do you think you still have so much yet to accomplish but feel exhausted, drained and sometimes lack the motivation and energy to do what's in your heart? Do you wake up and not have time to even notice the roses, let alone smell them?

In this state, you're constantly in survival mode, completely caught up in the hustle and bustle of modern life. You constantly feel on edge, anticipating the next challenge or setback and struggling to find balance amid the chaos. Each day feels like a race just to get through to the end, not to stuff up, while barely keeping it all together. Yet somehow, along the way, you expect yourself to be calm, present, focused, productive and rational and do your best despite what life throws your way.

Being in a constant mode of survival is no fun; you are always on the lookout, on high alert, highly strung, and stuck in the reactive nature of the here and now. Constantly feeling like this takes a toll on your emotional, mental and physical health, which in turn affects

your ability to do and achieve your best. Your productivity suffers, as does your wellbeing. Your relationships also suffer, as those closest to you often bear the brunt of your abrupt or reactive responses.

As I outline in the preface, I was intimately familiar with this state. I also knew my story was not mine alone, and it served as an important reminder that even those who appear to have it all together can battle internal struggles in silence. Finding solace in this realisation, I understood that acknowledging my own challenges was where I would find true strength and resilience. By taking proactive steps forward, even if they were small, I could begin to break free from stagnation and feel empowered and energised.

At this very moment, I realised I had the power to create something truly transformative, a tool that went beyond mere survival and could unlock the full potential of the human mind and spirit to help myself—and others—thrive. Having counselled and coached countless individuals through their own struggles, I knew I possessed a wealth of knowledge and insight that could benefit me in my current phase of life and serve as a beacon of hope for others. With each person I had helped over the years, I had gained invaluable insights into the intricacies of the human psyche, and now it was time to apply that wisdom to my own life. I knew that by using my journey and the lessons I learned along the way, I could find a way to inspire others to reap the benefits of transforming their mindsets for optimal daily living.

This realisation prompted me to question how our brains could be primed for greatness at the start of the day, when they are at their most malleable. Before being distracted by the challenges of the day, how could we activate and optimise our brain in a way that helps us to thrive? I started to explore the daily rituals of high-performing professionals. Through research into existing morning routines and beyond, I identified a gap: the absence of a reliable, science-backed

method to prime the brain at the start of the day, to foster daily productivity and happiness.

I felt a genuine renewed sense of purpose and determination, and set out to develop an effective, simple and practical approach to a morning formula. It would not only nourish my mindset but also empower me to break free from the constant cycle of survival. This led to the development of my 5Qs Formula, and during this process I underwent my own transformation. After a long time, I finally experienced a profound sense of internal alignment, harmonising both my heart and head. I did the deep inner work to develop my impact, cultivate emotional connection, find balance, maintain rational thinking even during high pressure and stress, and embrace my inner strength. Importantly, once developed, I knew I could then pass on this formula to others.

As I worked through the process of developing and fine-tuning the formula, leaning heavily into psychology, neuroscience and my leadership experience, I knew that its principles were not just meant for me alone; they were meant to be shared with the world. Each insight gained from my years of counselling, mentoring and coaching hundreds of individuals became the building block, a cornerstone in the foundation of this transformative formula.

Introducing the 5Qs Formula

The 5Qs Formula is a science-backed, proven formula to prime the brain, unlock the full potential within and cultivate an intentional and optimistic mindset to maximise daily productivity and happiness. The formula derives its name from its five core questions, each designed to catalyse self-reflection, priming, accountability and daily personal growth. The 5Qs Formula helps you do more of what matters, magnifies your joy and helps you be 5 per cent better each day.

You can think of the 5Qs Formula as a compass that guides you through the vast sea of daily life. By starting your day with taking stock of your emotional state (question one), acknowledging the winds of gratitude (question two), assessing your current position and trajectory (question three), plotting your course with specific goals (question four) and finally setting sail with intention and purpose (question five), you ensure that you're steering towards your desired direction for the day ahead. Without this intentional navigation at the outset of your day, you risk drifting aimlessly or being at the mercy of the external currents. By starting the day with the 5Qs Formula, you can gain a clear sense of direction, empowerment and resilience, enabling you to navigate life's challenges and opportunities with clarity and purpose.

The five questions in the formula are as follows:

- *Question 1:* What is your emotional temperature, and what are you feeling today?
- *Question 2, parts A and B:* What experiences, things or people in your life are you grateful for because they inspire you to be a better version of yourself? Think of a time you have received gratitude and appreciation from someone; how did it make you feel?
- *Question 3:* What is working well for you right now, and what could be working better for you?
- *Question 4:* What three things do you want to achieve today?
- *Question 5:* How will you show up today?

Through focusing on these questions, the 5Qs Formula provides a reliable, science-backed solution to prime your brain to address productivity issues, energy stagnation and interpersonal

communication issues. And it only takes five minutes a day! Ultimately, these five minutes spent priming your brain can help you lead a more fulfilling and successful life.

And you can even use the following PRIME acronym as a memory prompt when you first start out:

- **P:** Pinpoint emotions and feelings.
- **R:** Recognise gratitude.
- **I:** Identify what is working and could be working better.
- **M:** Make a list of three high-impact tasks for today.
- **E:** Envision how you want to show up today.

After outlining some of the basics in part I of this book, each of the chapters in part II is dedicated to one of the 5Qs Formula questions, to help you understand why the question is important and how it helps you maximise your productivity and joy. I've also included lots of examples throughout the book, taken from my own experience and the many clients I've worked with. (All names have been changed.) These examples, along with the self-reflection exercises through the book, help you to get started and apply the learning to your own experience.

Getting primed to act – from the start of your day

Have you been to a restaurant, looked at the menu, and been completely spoilt for choice on what to order, because everything sounds so delicious and appealing? Being a vegetarian for my entire life, I've often found myself at restaurants only being able to

choose from one or two vegetarian meals on the menu, especially when growing up in the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 1990s. However, after migrating to Melbourne, Australia, in 2009 and settling into the northern suburbs, I found myself in a bohemian area with fully vegetarian restaurants, where I could actually order anything from the entire menu.

Because this was a rare situation to be in, I excitedly read and re-read the menu to see what dish I really wanted to order. I found myself in the unusual situation of having too many choices and, in a sense, I was stuck in the decision-paralysis mode by my overwhelming options. It took me so much longer to decide because I had too many other similarly attractive food options. I procrastinated in making a decision, and then second-guessed my decision, overthinking what I would really like. All this deliberation over a simple menu choice—clearly a ‘first world issue’ to contend with.

This sort of decision-paralysis—and sometimes over the smallest of choices—is far from unusual, however. In fact, research shows we make over 3500 decisions per day, most of which are not of high impact or relevance, or conducive to productivity, wellbeing and relationships. When faced with too many choices, and especially when the options are more similar than dissimilar, most people find making a decision that much harder. This concept is very important to understanding the effectiveness of the 5Qs Formula, because this formula requires you to choose and make a series of small yet highly impactful and intentional decisions at the start of your day. Making these decisions warms up your decision-making muscles, empowers and primes you, and provides you with a sense of control, autonomy and liberation—all from the very start of your day.

Each time you decide to apply the 5Qs Formula and answer each of the questions within it, you enable your brain to experience a neurochemical boost, a dopamine hit, which motivates you to make