

# 59

## SECONDS

**Think a little  
Change a lot**

**'A triumph of  
scientifically proven  
advice over misleading  
myths of self-help.  
Challenging, uplifting  
and long overdue'  
Derren Brown**

**Professor  
Richard Wiseman**

Also by Richard Wiseman

**QUIRKOLOGY**

j-40633

**Richard Wiseman**

# **59 SECONDS**

**Think a little, change a lot**

M.F.Axundov adına  
Azərbaycan Milli  
Kitabxanası

PAN BOOKS

109



First published 2009 by Macmillan

This edition published 2010 by Pan Books  
an imprint of Pan Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited  
Pan Macmillan, 20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR  
Basingstoke and Oxford  
Associated companies throughout the world  
[www.panmacmillan.com](http://www.panmacmillan.com)

ISBN 978-0-330-51160-5

Copyright © Richard Wiseman 2009

The right of Richard Wiseman to be identified as the  
author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance  
with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or  
transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written  
permission of the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorized  
act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal  
prosecution and civil claims for damages.

9

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from  
the British Library.

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,  
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out,  
or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent  
in any form of binding or cover other than that in which  
it is published and without a similar condition including this  
condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Visit [www.panmacmillan.com](http://www.panmacmillan.com) to read more about all our books  
and to buy them. You will also find features, author interviews and  
news of any author events, and you can sign up for e-newsletters  
so that you're always first to hear about our new releases.

*To a very good friend  
in times of change*

## **Acknowledgements**

This book would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. First, thanks to the wonderful advice and guidance provided by my agent Patrick Walsh, editors Richard Milner and Jon Butler and press guru Dusty Miller. Thanks also to Clive Jeffries and Emma Greening for providing such insightful feedback at every stage, to Portia Smith for playing a key role in everything, to Jim Underdown and Spencer Marks for measuring the hands of so many famous people, to Roger Highfield for helping explore the psychology of surnames, to Rachael Armstrong for her insightful comments on romance and to Sam Murphy for her help in discovering the relationship between attraction and sport. Finally, as ever, special thanks also to the wonderful Caroline Watt for giving far beyond the call of duty. Thank you.

## **Contents**

### **Introduction**

Self-help exposed, Sophie's question and the potential for rapid change.

1

### **HAPPINESS**

Why positive thinking often fails, how the real route to happiness involves a pencil, keeping the perfect diary, small acts of kindness, and developing the gratitude attitude.

7

### **PERSUASION**

Why rewards fail, how to give the perfect interview, improve your social life by making mistakes, never lose your wallet again, and convince anyone of anything using your pet frog.

39

### **MOTIVATION**

The dark side of visualization, how to achieve absolutely anything by creating the perfect plan, overcoming procrastination, and employing 'double-think'.

83



### **CREATIVITY**

Exploding the myth of brainstorming, how to get in touch with your inner Leonardo by merely glancing at modern art, lying down, and putting a plant on your desk.

113

### **ATTRACTION**

Why you shouldn't play hard to get, how the real art of seduction involves the simplest of touches, rollercoaster rides and avoiding artificial Christmas trees.

145

### **STRESS**

Why not to kick and scream, how to reduce resentment in seconds, harness the power of a four-legged friend and think your way to low blood pressure.

179

### **RELATIONSHIPS**

The perils of 'active listening', why Velcro can help couples stick together, words speak louder than actions and a single photograph can make all the difference.

205

### **DECISION MAKING**

Why two heads are no better than one, how never to regret a decision again, protect yourself against hidden persuaders and tell when someone is lying to you.

233

### **PARENTING**

The Mozart myth, how to choose the best name for a baby, instantly divine a child's destiny using just three marshmallows and effectively praise young minds.

267

### **PERSONALITY**

Why not to trust graphology, how to gain an apparently magical insight into other people's personality from their fingers and thumbs, their pets and the time they go to bed.

297

### **CONCLUSION**

Sophie's answer: Ten techniques in 59 seconds.

325

**Notes 331**

# 59

'At last'  
is bas  
Perfec  
people  
Ferma

f-40633

**'This is a self-help book, but with a difference: almost everything in it is underpinned by peer-reviewed and often fascinating research. It could actually help you be a little happier, perform better at interviews, procrastinate less, improve your relationships, reduce your stress levels and be a better parent'**

*New Scientist*

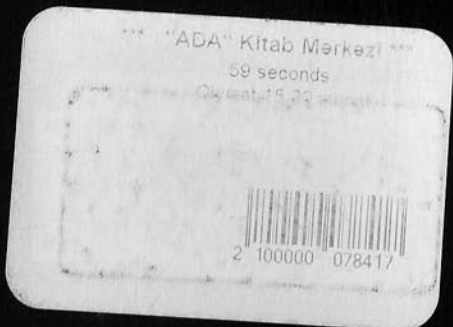
Welcome to the new science of rapid change. In *59 Seconds* psychologist Richard Wiseman exposes modern-day mind myths promoted by the self-help industry, and outlines quick and quirky techniques that help people to achieve their aims in minutes, not months.

Think a little  
Change a lot . . .

**Discover why even thinking about going to the gym can help you keep in shape**

**Learn how pot plants make you more creative**

**Find out why putting a pencil between your teeth instantly makes you feel happier**



**NON-FICTION**

Cover design based on original concept by Root

“Müəlliflik hüququ və əlaqəli hüquqlar haqqında” Azərbaycan Respublikası Qanununa və nəşr ilinə, ölkə üçün mühüm əhəmiyyət kəsb etdiyinə görə bu elektron resursdan yalnız kitabxananın “Lokal şəbəkədən istifadə üzrə oxu zalı”nda istifadə etmək olar.

\* \* \*

Due to Law of Azerbaijan Republic on “Copyright and related laws”, year of publication and for this reason that this material is important for our republic you can use this electron resource only in the “Local network reading hall”.

\* \* \*

Принимая во внимание закон Азербайджанской Республики "Об авторском праве и сопутствующим правам", год издания, и чрезвычайную важность для страны, получить доступ к данному электронному ресурсу можно только в библиотечном "Читальном зале по использованию локальной сети".