

Will Power

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PIONEERS ASSISTANCE FUND

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2016

LOSING SLEEP OVER RESTLESS NIGHTS?

Q: I find I get up earlier than I ever did when I was younger. Is it true we need less sleep as we get older?

A: According to the National Sleep Foundation, that is a myth. Older adults continue to need 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

The problem many have is the poor quality of sleep, causing you to feel tired during the day. Daytime sleepiness can lead to naps, which then interfere with nighttime sleep.

Factors of Poor Sleep

Most living creatures have a natural sleep-wake cycle that is based on a number of factors. Biological factors include getting up to use the bathroom, waking to eat or drink, or your body no longer feels comfortable lying down. Environmental factors include light and noise (your ears still register sounds when you are asleep). Emotional factors also play a part in sleep.

Other Factors

Depression makes people want to stay in bed despite poor sleep. Anxiety makes it hard to fall asleep. Happiness helps people want to get up each morning and face the day.

Medications might interfere with your sleep. If you think this is the case, read all instructions and warnings that come with your prescriptions, even if you have been taking them for years, and discuss with your prescriber.

Overcoming Poor Sleep

Pre-Sleep Tips

Sleep experts agree that shutting down your brain at bedtime is an important daily task. Create a relaxing sleep environment (low light, quiet, pleasant aromas) and routine. Take a moment to reflect on the day while taking a few deep breaths. Tell yourself that anything running through your mind can be handled tomorrow, and that you want to have a good night's sleep. Focus on something you want to do tomorrow that brings joy so that you want to get up in the morning. Stretch out your limbs and relax.

Keep a Sleep Journal

If you think you are not having quality sleep, try keeping a sleep journal. Note bedtime, wake time, what you ate or drank and when, medications you take, number of times you got up in the night, and how rested you feel. Look for trends and areas where you can make changes.

Sources:

"Sleep Disorders," available at:
<https://sleepfoundation.org/>.

"National Center for Sleep Disorders Research
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/org/ncsdr/>

JOKE OF THE MONTH

*"What did one wall say to the other?"
"Meet you at the corner."*

WILL CALL

*Do you or someone you know
need our assistance? Call toll-free
(888) 994-3863 or wrpioneers.org*





EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS & OTHERS

When we think about mindfulness, it is often to encourage our readers to focus on inner qualities, self-talk, or private thoughts during quiet moments. What about the mindfulness you bring to the lives of others? You cannot be inside their minds, but they can be “on” yours.

Indeed, one of the challenges of living a mindful life is that it feels somewhat uncomfortable at first to focus on our own thoughts and feelings. It's easier to think about fixing someone else's problems instead of the soul searching required to reduce our own. Mindfulness for others lets you balance your desire to help others and your personal growth that serves you.

One way to use mindfulness to help others is to set an example. If you notice a friend rushing through an activity or panicking about something, can you share with that person everything you know about mindfulness? A common example might be to ask that person, “Is this something that needs to be answered or solved right this minute?”

Another way is to pause and pay attention to how interactions with others make you feel. Whether in the moment, or afterwards, reflect on your relationships with others using the mindfulness techniques we have

suggested. Slow down, check in with yourself, ask yourself about your experience with that person. Are you doing something that serves to please that other person at your own expense? Are you making an excuse for doing something you don't want to do because you think it helps someone else?

Finally, reflective thinking is a form of mindfulness. It's the act of pausing to examine your own beliefs and thought processes. Using reflective thinking to look at your attitudes and opinions of the people in your life can benefit those relationships. The goal is to feel comfortable challenging your own negative beliefs about others in order to improve your social interactions. If you can do that, you can be a role model for someone else to do the same. One person at a time would be plenty of progress!

Resources:

“Mindfulness and reflective thinking” by Oxford Learning Institute, available at:

<https://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/oxfordlearninginstitute/documents/overview/rsv/Mindfulness.pdf>.

“4 Pointers for Using Mindfulness to Stop People Pleasing” by Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S., at:

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/11/02/4-pointers-for-using-mindfulness-to-stop-people-pleasing/>

“ QUOTE OF THE MONTH

An onion can make people cry, but there has never been a vegetable invented to make them laugh. - Will Rogers

