Getting Your Beauty Sleep

It’s 3:00 a.m. and you’re lying in bed staring at the clock, unable to fall asleep. Getting good (restful) sleep is a cornerstone of mental, emotional, and physical health. Not getting good sleep may leave us feeling cranky, unmotivated, lethargic, unfocused and could lead to health problems.

More than 30% of the population suffers from insomnia and one in three people suffer from some form of insomnia during their lifetime. Our current fast paced life style is a factor. People today sleep 20% less than they did 100 years ago. Stress may also cause insomnia. More than half of American lose sleep due to stress and/or anxiety. In addition, 90% of people with depression also experience insomnia. However, most of the time, insomnia is simply due to poor sleeping habits. So, what can one do to get better sleep?

Sleep hygiene is a term used to describe good sleep habits and behaviors that aid in sleeping well. The following sleep hygiene tips may aid you in getting the good restful sleep you need:

1. **Maintain a fixed bedtime.** Our bodies become accustomed to routine so train it to go to bed and wake up at more or less the same time everyday...even when off from work.
2. **Go to bed only when sleepy.** Avoid laying awake in bed. Reserve the bed for sleeping only. This involves not doing other activities, such as watching TV, being on your smartphone/tablet or reading in bed.
3. **Try again.** If you are still awake after 20 minutes, get up and sit quietly in a chair or do something soothing, like reading a book (avoid activities that are too stimulating).
4. **Avoid caffeine** and other stimulants 4-6 hours before bed.
5. **No naps.** Avoid taking naps during waking hours. However, if a nap is necessary, limit it to less than 30 minutes and not before bedtime.
6. **Set the stage.** Ensure that your bedroom encourages sleep. Have it as dark and quiet as possible, and use comfortable bedding. If quiet doesn’t work try using “white noise.” Some find a running fan helpful, because it isn’t too distracting helpful.
7. **Avoid alcohol** 4-6 hours before bed. Alcohol may be relaxing and make you sleepy but it also interferes with quality of sleep so you won’t feel as rested the next day. **Always consult with your doctor if insomnia lasts more than 2-3 days.**

“Most of the time, insomnia is simply due to poor sleep habits.”
A grudge is a heavy chain that ties us to the past and keeps us from living in the present as we rethink and re-experience the hurtfulness of the grudge over and over again. Grudges may run deep and last a lifetime. It’s not easy to let go of grudges. When wronged, we are “wired” to retaliate or withdraw (fight or flight). This reflexive response is a defense mechanisms to guard against future harm.

Another reason grudges are hard to let go of is because over time, the grudge may serve as part of our identity. Humans like to affix labels and create categories. To release a grudge, our identity as “victim” and the other person’s identity as the “wrong doer,” has to be let go so we may redefine ourselves.

Grudges don’t help us recover as “survivors,” make us feel better or allow for the hurt to heal. Instead, they have us re-experience our hurt feelings, which doesn’t allow us to come out any stronger. If held on for long, grudges may:

- Negatively impact new relationships.
- Cause you to become so wrapped up in the past wrongs that you can’t enjoy the present.
- Negatively impact your own health (e.g. immune system, blood pressure) or lead to depression or anxiety.
- Cause you to withdraw and lose connections with other people.

While it is true that some people are naturally more forgiving, everyone can learn to be a little more forgiving. Understanding the stages of forgiveness may help.

1. Increase your awareness. Notice where your thoughts go and what you feel. Give those feelings names (anger, guilt, shame etc.). You have to know your feelings before trying to manage them.
2. Define who and what you need to forgive. Decide to forgive.
3. Experience the hurt. Don’t suppress or ignore the painful feelings. Talk them out with a supportive person or put them to paper in a journal/letter.
4. Forgive the wrong doer. Remember, forgiveness is for your own peace of mind. It does not mean condoning or saying the wrong was okay. Accept apologies.
5. Release the hurt. This involves letting go of the hurt that is bottled up. Don’t look for further offenses, rather, expect that there will be both goodness and tough times ahead. Be present.
6. Refine yourself. You narrate the “character” in your life novel. Decide how you want your character to be at the end of the book. Shed the “wronged” and “victim” identities and rewrite your self as a “victor.”
7. Give good. Do something kind for someone else without being asked, feeling obligated or the expectation of something in return. We ultimately help ourselves when helping others.

You are at work and notice another employee becoming agitated, frustrated and upset. You want to help that person de-escalate but aren’t sure what to do or to say.

- **Don’t say “calm down!”** Although well intentioned, this usually has the opposite effect.
- **Don’t criticize.** Avoid telling the employee what he/she “should do” or “should’ve done.” The only goal is helping the other person de-escalate. Save problem solving for later.
- **Do listen.** Give your complete attention and paraphrase to show you are listening. “So, let me make sure I understand the situation...”
- **Do show empathy.** Acknowledge what that other person is feeling/experiencing “I see this is upsetting and frustrating.”
- **Do offer help.** Ask, “How can I help you right now.” You may not be in a position to offer concrete help. Some request a minute alone or benefit from a drink of water.
- **Do encourage breathing.** We have shallow breathing and even hold our breath when in distress. Encourage the other person to take deep breaths from the diaphragm (exhale twice as long as inhale). “I’m going to take a few deep breaths with you before doing anything else. Try to match your breathing with mine.” This breathing technique helps decrease distress by rebalancing the nervous system.
Want to Change Your Work Reputation?

Hopefully, you have a positive reputation at work. But what if you don’t? Whether justified or not, what can you do to correct a negative reputation? Well, don’t fear! There are concrete steps you can take to build a positive view of you and your work.

- **Own your mistakes and behavior.** This is not an easy task but is the first big step toward starting fresh. Apologize for unintended and intended errors rather than ignoring and allowing resentment to fester. One has to put the issue(s) on the table and acknowledge them in order to work through and move on.

  “There is no quick fix in rebuilding a reputation. Instead, it is built on repetition.”

- **Avoid being defensive.** No one likes to feel unjustly judged; it may very well trigger anger in you. At the same time, managing those feelings is critical in not furthering a bad rep. Avoid accusing others of being wrong about you. Instead, let your actions speak for themselves. Don’t say, “You see me as a jerk, and I’m not!” Statements like these create division by saying you are right, and they are wrong. One is better off accepting the other person’s thoughts as their own perception. A statement like, “I don’t want to be seen as a jerk and I’m sorry to hear that’s what you think of me” sidesteps defensiveness.

- **Look the part.** Appearance matters! Show up on time looking ready and able to do the job. Come prepared with all the appropriate tools and equipment.

- **Manage expectations.** Do what you said you’d do. Trust is an important part of any reputation; follow through on commitments but don’t overpromise on what you can’t deliver.

- **Look for opportunities for teamwork and collaboration.** Often, our knee jerk reaction is avoiding people who may think poorly of us. Unfortunately, avoiding won’t help change minds about you. If they hold a belief about you, it is up to you to offer evidence to the contrary. Realize that you will have to demonstrate the opposite view of yourself over and over again. There is no quick fix in rebuilding a reputation. Instead, it is built on repetition.

- **Make others look good.** Help someone else shine at work. When asked to pitch-in, give it your best and without cutting corners.

- **Over do it for a while.** If you have a reputation of always being a few minutes late for work, showing up on time may not be enough. You may want to show up to work 15 minutes early. If you have a reputation of being passive, you may need to show up to every meeting prepared with a meaningful contribution. Once perceptions begin to shift a bit, scale back to what is comfortable for you (e.g. show up on time and not feel overly pressured to voice a thought at every meeting).

- **Find commonalities.** Discover and share similarities between you and others. Shared traits, interests, hobbies, travels, family make up, and home neighborhoods are just some examples. Research shows that people automatically have a much more positive attitude toward people that are in their “in group.”

- **Be competent.** This entails consistently demonstrating the skills and expertise needed for your job each and every day. People tend to remember the mistakes way more than the jobs well done. Don’t cut corners, double check your work and be on-time, every time.

- **Don’t expect change overnight.** Understand that it takes time and patience to change minds. The amount of time it can take depends on 1) how deep that belief is about you, 2) how contrasting the impression is and what you want your reputation to be, and 3) how many opportunities you have to change their minds.

- **Get organized.** Keep to-do lists, prioritize tasks, and track your deadlines. Use a planner or Microsoft Outlook to manage appointments and important notes.

- **Practice good people skills.** Pay attention to your non-verbal communication. Is your body language giving the signals you want? Tune-in when others are speaking. Paraphrasing is a great way to show others that you are listening and being attentive. Try wearing different hats to see other’s issues, problems and situations from different points of views. You don’t have to agree but you can recognize that others may see things differently.
Relapse Prevention Tips

Maintaining sobriety is a full time job. It is very easy to slip if not working on your relapse prevention plan daily. Below are some points to consider in keeping sober:

- Educate yourself about the science of addiction (e.g. dopamine, environmental stressors, and genetic predisposition).
- Don’t worry or stress when things go wrong; do the right thing next time.
- Develop a positive attitude; it leads to a positive life.
- Don’t compare yourself to others.
- Limit or block friends who trigger drinking or using.
- Forgive yourself and forgive others.
- It’s okay to miss out on events if you feel they will trigger you to use or drink.
- Helping others helps you stay sober.

EAP Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/emotional problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key Personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.

City of Milwaukee Events and Reminders

- Not feeling well? Visit the Workplace Clinic (841 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI. 53202 (Zeidler Municipal Building) for FREE onsite health care services. Call 414-777-3413 for information or to schedule an appointment.

- Free screening, consultation, and education services to prevent and treat potential musculoskeletal injuries. Schedule an appointment with a physical therapist at the Injury Prevention Clinic. Call 414-777-3413 to schedule an appointment.

- Health4Me™ is a UnitedHealthcare (UHC) mobile app that provides instant access to your family’s critical health information, anytime/anywhere. Find a physician, check the status of a claim or speak directly with a healthcare professional.

Slow Down For Mental Health

Most of us don’t like anything slow...slow internet, slow cashier line, slow elevator. At the same time the faster we go the more exhausted, stressed, and frustrated we likely feel.

Taking time to slow down is important for mental health. Slowing down does not mean being idle or unproductive. It means being in the moment, being still, and allowing a recharge and regroup.

Our brain needs this downtime to reset, make sense of information and organize. Start by breathing from your diaphragm (exhale 2x longer than your inhale). This type of breathing stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which regulates our stress response. Next, try to focus on one task at a time and eliminate as much multitasking as possible. Most importantly, build in breaks throughout the day.