

THE SECRET OF SLEEP

Mental health is made up of many parts (see The Story of Health 1, 2, & 3). However none is more important than sleep. Sleep is such a wonderful gift to the body and mind, but do we ever really sing its praises? Do we even understand the many wonders it performs in our names? Our experience at Reach tells us that we do not.

Those of you familiar with our work will know the slogan, ‘the secret to health is the removal of waste’. So often health is spoken about in terms of what we must ‘put in’ and yet it is what we fail to excrete that is most likely to poison us. We produce about thirty billion cells of waste each day, which is part of the natural by-product of life’s great wonder, and it is essential to remove this waste. The body is busy detoxifying throughout the day using the liver, kidneys, lungs, lymphatic system, colon and skin to excrete the many waste products in order to maintain health. The vast array of functions performed by these and their sister organs, to maintain bodily purity, is simply staggering; all in the name of achieving alkalinity. The body’s great enemy is acidosis (excess acid), which challenges our health and well-being on every level. It is interesting to note that some acidity is vital within the body to maintain balance and health such as in the gut, but on the whole, we are alkaline organisms, which means our PH level needs to be above 7 for optimum health. This is where the magician (sleep) comes to our aid, because it is whilst we are asleep that our alkalinity is restored.

The challenges of each day, assuming we are healthy, move us from a position of alkalinity (in the morning) to acidity (by nightfall). As a result of the four billion activities the body performs each second, to keep us alive, countless by-products are produced, increasing the acidic load of the body. As a consequence, we become increasingly tired, due to the buildup of acid in the system and so the body demands sleep in order to restore the alkaline state needed for optimum life. It is during sleep that many of the ‘household chores’ that restore and rejuvenate the body take place. In fact, without the change in consciousness that sleep brings we would just not survive mentally or physically. Think of those times when you have not had enough sleep or are desperately tired – your brain is scrambled, concentration gone and your body collapses under the weight of fatigue. This is because as your consciousness changes from being awake and alert to sleepy and unconscious, your body literally moves into a different mode in order to restore the energy that’s been lost through acidosis. The theta and delta wave states of the brain, which are the levels where ‘true’ sleep occurs (see How Brainwave Patterns Relate to Levels of Consciousness), rapidly restore alkalinity.

We are like rechargeable batteries, and as we expend our energy, over the course of the day, we are left depleted by nightfall and so as we lie dormant in our beds Mother Nature busies herself restoring balance and order. This beautiful story of restoration is better grasped when we understand the vital role of the sun and the moon in our lives and the dance the electrolytes perform in our bodies under the influence of their immense power. The interconnectedness of everything is too much to explore here, as our present focus is on sleep, however, explore our model further and its clear and fluid structure will transport you above and beyond the current limits of your understanding. Our approach recognises that ‘synergy is the answer’; it is the antidote for most of our misunderstandings and complaints.

The more we understand we are vibrant beings of energy made up of light, food, water and air the more we come to realise that as we expend those energies, as with all energy, they need to be renewed. Sleep is that path of renewal and so not only should we give thanks for its great gift, but we really should co-operate in its great undertaking... How?

Well, as you lie in bed each night, give thanks for the miracle that is about to take place. Recognise that this act of sleep is vital for optimum physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being. Understand that it is a mistake to just 'fall asleep'. When we go to bed and simply 'crash out' with no sense of care and awareness of our relationship to sleep, although we will undoubtedly get some of the benefits of repair and rejuvenation, our lack of co-operation means that there is so much that we actually miss out on. For example, the world of dreams has incredible knowledge and insight to offer us and yet so few of us drink from its abundance. Sleep is an opportunity for the conscious and sub-conscious minds to compare and share notes; to inform and enrich one another in their tasks of offering us the best quality of life. Left to their own devices they will do the best job that they can because the body, as an organism, is never working against itself. It's always doing the best it can with the resources and potential available (see *Persuading the Body* series). However, our conscious participation raises the bar. Like a potter working his clay, we are able to beautifully mould and shape our sleep, producing an inner state that is tranquil, balanced and truly enriching. So, try being a potter tonight....

As you lie in your bed allow yourself to sink into the loving arms of sleep. Embrace it as you are lowered into its gentle, kind and benevolent depths. You may find it helpful to see your bed as a safe, soothing, sanctuary – a healing space endowed with peace, love and whatever else you feel your heart, mind or body need. Visualising your bed as a sanctuary, maybe a womb-like space that is endowed with light, is a wonderfully comforting experience. Imagine yourself being bathed in the gentle waves of this light. It can be helpful to see this light as a different colour each night. 'Feel' your way into the colour that is right for you on each occasion. Green offers nurture and balance; blue, peace and harmony. White light brings healing and a sense of completeness, yellow offers joy and optimism. Red light offers strength and power; violet offers intuition and insight. It may be that the colours have different meanings for you and that's fine. Don't be confined by our list, as we know that colour interpretation is influenced by many factors. So, as you imagine being immersed in the light of your choice, imbibe whatever meaning resonates with your experience. This is an extremely beneficial way to drift off into the world of restoration, rejuvenation and balance (see *Guided Sleep*).

As you start to see your bed as a place of light, or as a kind womb, or even a pool of divine water that is safe and healing, your sixty trillion cells will be ushered into a symphony of harmony. Each organ, muscle, the countless tissues and infinite miles of nerves, veins, arteries and capillaries will be orchestrated into a biological rhythm that serves your every need. The conscious and sub-conscious minds will also busy themselves creating the conditions that promote clarity, insight and harmony, which in turn create a life full of gratitude. As you live in this place of deep appreciation, sleep is able to do its best work and share its deepest secrets with you. Try it tonight and every night and you will taste its sweetness and be adorned by its beauty.