

Deep Sleep

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Two tools to cure insomnia.



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Deep sleep! Half the population can't. Of the two thirds of the American population who say they get enough sleep, half report the quality of their sleep to be no better than fair. Let's talk about sleep.

If you think that sleep is just one thing -- that you either are in it, or you're not -- then you need a better understanding. Sleep is a woven series of states that prevail outside normal waking consciousness. You have some conscious control in entering the first of these states, and that is where most people get stuck. Being unable to move from waking consciousness to the first stage of sleep is insomnia.

Letting go of waking consciousness is the first step to entering sleep. It's a step in which you have some control, and by using the right tools you have a good chance of curing insomnia. This can be done using self-hypnosis, it does not require drugs.

The first tool is relaxation. I would be embarrassed to offer something so obvious... except that it's not so obvious. The process of becoming relaxed is like uttering a magic spell. It seems superficial but it is actually profound. Relaxation is magic for your body.

Being in the waking state is more than just being conversant, it involves maintaining your body in an outwardly directed, ready state. It involves the management of tension and stress and the general state of arousal. In waking state we amplify many body functions while depressing others, and subtle states are often suppressed entirely.

The relaxation necessary for entering sleep is a deep relaxation. It is a thorough relaxation of muscles throughout the body plus a relaxation of the mind. Ideally, this is a learned skill. Surprisingly, it is a skill many people have not learned. It is not hard to learn, it's mostly a process of becoming more aware. Here a little coaching, guided visualization, or a prerecorded tape can be effective.



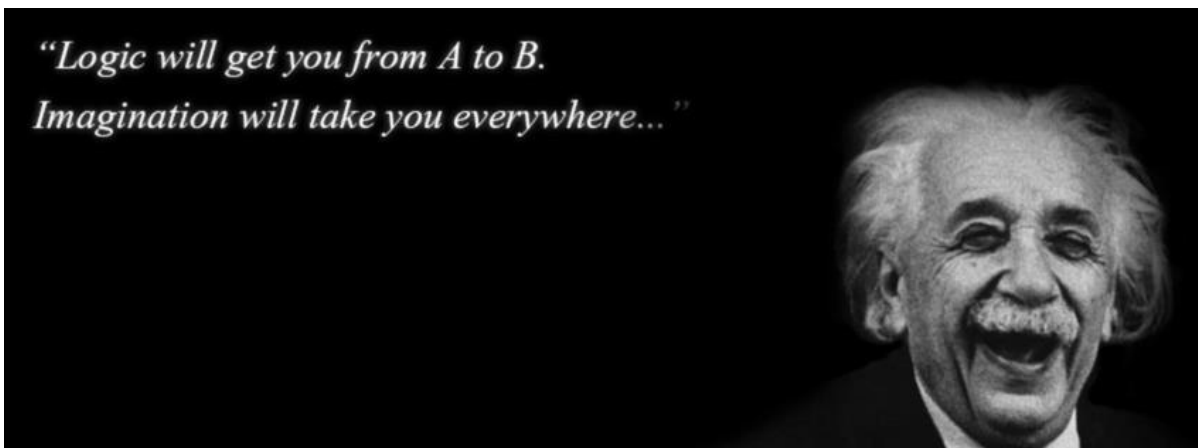
The second tool is preparation, preparation for what might happen in sleep. Replace the idea that sleep is drawing the curtain on the day's activities with a vision of the curtain rising on your inner world. Preparing for sleep by quieting our talking mind is one thing. Preparing for the communication and exploration of sleep is something else.

Think of sleep as the beginning of your day, not as the end. Imagine what you would like to dream, imagine that you are setting up your dream time. You will have dreams, even if you don't remember them. If you remember them you wake up with a story; if you don't remember them you wake up with a feeling. Either way you dream, and if you participate your dreams will be shaped by you.

Prepare for sleep not by thinking about what you don't like that did happen, but what you would like that should happen. Focus on the kind of integration that you want. Tell yourself, "I'm going into a land of communication and understanding, and in this land I will change my understanding of the world and my life." See your efforts as more than just resting from your day, but as the creation of your life.



How is it done? By using your imagination. Imagination is the language of sleep. Not just visual imagination, but also communication imagination. Imagine what your tense muscles have to tell you, your stomach, your breath, your pulse, your heart and your spirit. Shrink yourself to the size of a cell and talk to the cells in your body. Imagination is the key, because what is happening during sleep is wilder than you can imagine.



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