

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, Preface & PROLOGUE



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Warning

First, a warning. The material in this course is designed to lead you into a dissociated trance, a trance in which you lose awareness of what's going on around you. This is to improve your focus on yourself, but it will dull your response to events in the world.

Do not listen to this material while operating machinery, or in situations where you need to share your attention with the world around you. Do not listen to this material while riding a bike or driving a car. This material will not put you to sleep completely, but it will put you into a state that is not entirely awake.

Acknowledgments

Two handshakes helped shape my life.

In 1967, when I was 11 and on one of my trips to deliver food to my older brother, I visited Treflick's famous pet store, somewhere on the site of what was to become The World Trade Center. At the back of the store, in a cage as thick as a bank vault, was a young chimpanzee. It was strange to approach the cage and look into his or her brown eyes. I reached out, not too far, and he or she reached out, and we brushed our fingertips. They were calloused, smooth, human, and different.

On a Sunday, summer afternoon in 1969 my friend and I rang the doorbell of apartment 7D in my friend's New York, Jewish, upper middle class apartment building on 12th Street. Not believing the rumors, we were dumbstruck when Jimi Hendrix opened the door wearing a white

terrycloth bathrobe. He leaned down to give me a big hand, and a soft handshake. He didn't invite us in, but he seemed really nice. He died the next year of a drug overdose.

I doubt this had any effect on either of them, but it did on me, and who's to say?

Preface

You only change anything in your life, health or otherwise, with the aid of your full body consciousness. That is all there is of you, and all that effects any change in you. Do not believe medicine "does" anything to you because, ultimately, you effect all healing. Medicine, when it works and it often doesn't, only bridges separations your body could not otherwise connect.

Life is built of states of consciousness and sleep is one of them. You are asleep as you are awake; it is a state of being. Sleep problems or dysfunctions are issues of consciousness, not issues of health separate from it.

This book -- it is actually a training -- views sleep as an activity controlled by your higher mind. Your higher mind is an elusive thing that resides in all things connected to you, sometimes conscious and cerebral, but more often chthonic, celestial, or ancestral. It is always present and listening, but hears many voices other than your own, many you would not recognize as having any language at all, such as your body.

This book speaks to your higher mind, and that is why it must be read to you. This training is unconscious, and you must be able to lose consciousness in it. Your consciousness exists to orient you, but it cannot perform healing. Your consciousness has brought you to this book, but it cannot learn what is in it. This book is best understood when you are in a trance state and your conscious mind is relieved. In this state your sensible mind is free to leave, and you will not mind this book, which works to avoid making sense.

"New ideas arrive... from one's subconscious mind, and the subconscious performs most effectively when the conscious part of the mind is not in high gear."

– Kip S. Thorne, in "Black Holes and Time Warps."

Prologue

The Elusive Second

Falling asleep only takes a second, waiting for it to happen can take hours. It's understandable insomniacs are searching for that one short moment, that one little fix, that will send them into another other world, just a blink away.

The troubled sleeper does not feel responsible for their condition. It's some kind of disease, isn't it? Well, there's the rub. I don't think it's a disease. Dysregulated hormones, disturbed cycles,

sleep apnea, or whatever you've got, is not a cause, it's a symptom. The cause is your life, and it's not going to change until you do.

Sleep is a psychosomatic process that involves one hundred percent of you, so that's what you need to change, maybe many small parts, or maybe a few large ones. There's a lot to learn, and it will benefit you tremendously.

A plethora of doctors, experts, pharmaceutical and prosthetic manufacturers would like to sell you a "bridge" to sleep. If this attracts you, then buy their wares. After you've run out of hope, or money, come back here, take responsibility, and get to work.

Sleep As Skill

We humans take the most difficult things for granted. Feeling entitled to life, liberty, and happiness we don't feel the need to learn about love, hate, identity, family, or children. Do you think you know these things by instinct? How about breathing, eating, or standing up straight? How about sleeping?

Maybe we knew all these things by instinct once -- like squirrels know how to shell an acorn -- but we don't live in stick nests anymore. What was instinct once was washed away by civilization, and with it went your natural ability to sleep. This book takes inventory of sleep's necessary skills. That one small moment of falling asleep is entry into every aspect of your life.

In sleep you revisit all aspects of your life. You revitalize your body, heal illness, consolidate experience, and expand your mind. The process invokes your inner healer to clear the casualties from the battlefield of this day, and every day before it. Nothing is too big or too small that it cannot lodge in your body, or ripple through your mind during sleep.

This is not a book about sleep, it's a training manual. Each chapter starts with a dispensable introduction to the chapter topics, designed to motivate you to proceed with the indispensable exercises that conclude each chapter.

The exercises are the book, and you can't read them, they must be read to you. This is not an option. You cannot learn through reading what you can learn through doing. This is true of anything, of course, but here I intend you to actually experience, practice, and learn the skills of sleep.

This book is primarily a set of audio files in which I speak to you, and which I suggest you listen to repeatedly. Consider listening to each one 5 or 10 times, until you've gotten "the juice" out of them. I believe listening to the exercises is sufficient to develop your skills, and that you don't need to understand or even hear the conceptual framework around which they're built.

In addition to these hypnotic inductions into the practice of the text, the chapter introductions are also included as audio files. You can listen to these introductions, or read them yourself. The introductions give a conceptual framework, but you don't need them. A "conceptual framework" is not a useful skill for sleep.

Everything Else

The chapter topics proceed from mechanical to psychological, but those are just concepts. I don't think the order is important. Certainly whatever you feel drawn to work on, work on.

Chapter One explores mind and body rhythms. Sleep is primarily a low frequency experience, and slow frequencies exist in the body. Learning to conjure and immerse yourself in these rhythms is essential.

Chapter Two explores frequency, it's meaning and what it feels like. Frequency is not well understood and it underlies our experience. This is important.

Chapter Three follows Traditional Chinese Medicine to translate the body's physical cycles into psychological image. Touch your body's basic functions, the engines of the ocean liner of sleep. Learn to turn the propellers of intention.

Chapters Four and Five address relaxation. Relaxation is misunderstood, it's not easy, and it's not about absence. It's about getting into "the zone" where things work. Athletes become relaxed at the top of their game. Chapter Four teaches relaxation of the body, Chapter Five relaxation of the mind. You'll be working on this for a long time. Love it.

The topic of Chapter Six is pain, but rather than focusing on the negative we focus on comfort. Learning to build a sense of comfort is a necessary skill. Why do we let them get away without teaching us this? I don't know. Here it is.

Chapter Seven, "Accommodation," builds the container for sleep. Sleep fills the mirror image of your waking life, and if your waking life is misshapen, your sleep will be distorted. Your sleep is shaped by your habits, rhythms, transitions, and attitudes.

Chapter Eight addresses all the things surrounding and supporting sleep, from food to clocks, to beds, water, and plants. All the little things, like blankets, and some of the big things, like exercise.

Chapters Nine and Ten build the skills of sleep's cognitive world, the world of dreams. What I have to say is unusual and ancient. I don't make a big deal about, I just divide it into two parts: being the architect of your dreams, and then living in these structures.

No exploration of sleep would be complete without an exploration of waking up. There should be a balance. As there are levels to sleep, there are levels to wakefulness. It is my hope that your skills will expand in both directions. This is the goal of Chapter Eleven and, ultimately, the book.

References

Thorne, Kip S. (1994). *Black Holes and Time Warps, Einstein's Outrageous Legacy*. W.W. Norton & Co., New York, NY. p. 462.