



Discovering the New World

Sleep problems are not medical, they're personal.
The only authority is you.

A romantic person accepts reality as harsh yet
continues to follow the guidance of dreams
and nurture the reality of love.

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This is the fourth and last section of the series, “Who Says What Sleep Is?”

In the previous, third section of this series, titled “**Sailing the Sea of Sleep**,” we explored the psychology of poor sleep. I emphasized that as sleep is a holistic phenomena the psychological issues that affects sleep are far reaching. That is, they affect you deeply and their rearrangement requires a significant commitment to change patterns in your life.

In this fourth and final section I conclude that the only reliable authority on the nature of your sleep problems is you. Only you can translate the nuanced patterns of tension you carry into actionable paths of change, and that these paths are both changes of mind and changes of state.

Tension

Most sleep problems are due to tension, but tension is not understood. Tension is just another word for poor regulation, and that is because tension can be anywhere, in any system, and can underlie any system's problem. Anything that your body does not do well can be ascribed to tension. Either the problem arises from tension, or is exacerbated by it.

If your body and mind are operating well, you will not have sleep problems, and while this is obvious it should be given a second thought. What is it about your general condition that is not operating well? There may be several answers, and if there are they must all be pursued. There is not one path to better sleep, all paths contribute.

The two most common sources of tension are physical and emotional pain. So, to be as general as possible, it's likely you'll have two paths to follow, and these paths will be quite different but they have common elements.

First, following either of them requires resolve. You must demand the health that you will find you are denied somewhere along these paths. When you find something that is denying you physical or emotional well being you must recognize this as a problem and you must give it priority.

Second, you must take authority. If you do accept that you have played a role in creating these problems, then you will not accord to yourself the power to fix them. If you behave instead as most of us have been trained, to abdicate your authority to someone else, then your problem will not be solved. Instead, their problem will be solved, and their problem amounts to your being their dominant problem, and their solution will be to make you not their dominant problem. That is to say that, for the most part, you'll be given the palliative care or symptom attenuation that is most convenient in meeting the needs of your provider.

So what is it that requires your resolve and authority? That's another story and, in fact, knowing the answer to that question is unimportant. It's unimportant because whatever answer I give you, you will not understand. Furthermore, whatever answer anyone gives you will not be the right answer. When you take authority, finding the answer is your responsibility, and with sufficient resolve, you will find it.



Three Forms of Stress

“There are many forms of relaxation: mental, physical, visceral, temporal, pertaining to health, exercise,

work, play, or relationships, for a start. These feel different, require different means, and have different ends, but we distinguish them only weakly ...” [Continue reading *Three Forms of Stress*](#)

Publicity

Finally, about publicity. Publicity, celebrity, and spectacle appeal to our sense of safety and distract us from the risk of individual responsibility. The publicity about the epidemic of sleep dysfunction exists at the confluence of desire, profit, anxiety, and fear. There is nothing new about sleep dysfunction; what’s new are the heightened levels of emotions.

Profit is made by addressing social anxiety, fears, and your desire for better sleep: surgery, sleep machines, sleeping pills, CBD oil, message, therapy, and self-help. Educate yourself.

The anxiety is social, coming from the general milloux of economic insecurity, social institutions, families, behaviors, uncertain futures, and headlong technological advancement. These are the epidemics and, because they’re either too close or too far away, we unconsciously manifest them as chronic conditions: paranoia, addiction, and sleep dysfunction, to name a few.

Fear arises when toxic anxiety starts to shut us down. We have to put it somewhere, we need something to respond to. People like horror movies not because they like horror, but because it’s a relief to give fear a face. Everyone feels better when the monster has been put “out there,” but the residue of anxiety remain. This relates to sleep problems because many people are not ready to explore their “contained” anxieties. Anxieties they contain in the form of addictive thought and behavior patterns. We all do this. It’s a survival mechanism.

My Suggestion

In myself and with my clients I have found many sleep problems rooted in life struggles. This is only made more tantalizing by the obscurity of the connection, but it is the very difficulty in sorting it out that reflects our complexity and calls us to take a larger role in our own development.

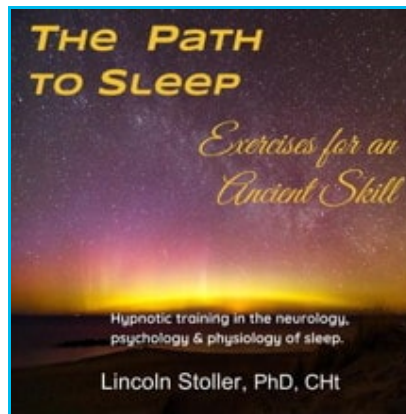
We all have unresolved chapters we’re reluctant to reopen and which grow to anxieties that wake us up at night, like ghosts in the attic. They emerge during sleep because sleep is a time of restoration when your emotional mind takes over. Waking reason can whitewashes life’s problems, but your emotions cannot be fooled.

Clarity comes slowly because the clarity you need is not analytic, organized, finished or complete. The clarity that emerges through working with tension, relaxation, imagination, emotion, and sleep is organic and unfolding. When you resolve one issue another usually follows, and this is OK. This is growth that’s purposeful and productive, and makes for a rewarding life.

I have an unusual book on sleep titled *[The Path to Sleep](#)*. It’s a combination of explanations and hypnotic inductions. The explanations expand your self understanding, and the inductions fortify your self-confidence. Reasoned arguments can be read as text, but hypnotic inductions must be heard. It is difficult to disconnect from your senses when your senses are engaged. The disengagement of hypnosis provides a more appropriate state, as does the disengagement of sleep.

Later this year I’ll offer text and audio versions of the book on Amazon and other outlets. Until then you can get the book in downloadable print and audio form from CD Baby, and from this webpage:

[Preview *The Path to Sleep* Text and Audio Book](#)



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