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for the FAMILY

# SLEEP

## IT DOES A FAMILY GOOD

how busy families can overcome sleep deprivation

DR. ARCHIBALD D. HART



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*Sleep, It Does a Family Good*

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## **A Personal Note to My Clients—Past and Present**

The personal stories I share in this book do not reflect any real person or persons. They are composites drawn from many cases as well as conversations I have had over the years in my seminars. Nevertheless, I owe you a note of gratitude for the trust you have bestowed on me in sharing your personal lives and the enormous wisdom I have derived from our conversations. I have tried hard to conceal any resemblance to actual cases, and I tell the stories in this book in narrative form only to make it more readable and my points more understandable. I love and respect so much all the clients I have seen over many years that I would never do anything to embarrass you or break the confidentiality you have entrusted to me.

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No book is ever published that is not the product of many minds and hands, and this book is no exception. It is always humbling to be a part of the team that brings birth to a work like this, and a special joy to be a part of all that it takes. It is appropriate, therefore, that I pay tribute to all those who have assisted me in this project. I am profoundly indebted to each and every one of them.

First and foremost, I am indebted to my gorgeous and loving wife, Kathleen, who has always been a source of encouragement and inspiration to me. A pastor once described her as “Jesus in a dress”—and there couldn’t be a more apt description of her than this. She was the one who many years ago alerted me to the importance of sleep and has led the way back to a healthier life for both of us.

Following closely are my three daughters, Catherine, Sharon, and Sylvia, who have all been a major source of inspiration in my life. Their gifts may vary, but their spirit of love and dedication to God’s Kingdom is astounding. It has been my privilege to be a father to the three most beautiful girls in the world—beautiful in every sense of the word.

And then there are my grandchildren, Vincent, Alan, Nicole, Ashley, Robbie, and Daniel, as well as Matt and Mitch, who are all the greatest gifts and blessings God could give any grandparent. They are all that a grandparent could possibly want, and I am proud of every one of them. So proud, in fact, that I am dedicating this book to them.

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for me, guiding me through the maze of publishing. And then came the sensitive and remarkable insights and editing skills of Brandy Bruce who took over and shaped my flimsy initial manuscript into the sharp, readable (I hope) book that I believe it has become. In the background were other Focus staff members, such as Nancy Shane, Brock Eastman, and Shari Martin (product marketing). Thank you all for your dedication.

## Introduction

Adam's birthday party Saturday? Check. Church on Sunday? Check. Presentation at work on Monday? Check. Dentist appointment Tuesday afternoon? Check. Change the oil in the car Wednesday afternoon? Check. Jane's soccer game Thursday? Check. Grocery shopping . . . I can fit that in on Friday, right? Check. Sleep? I wish!

Does any of this sound familiar to you? If so, you're not alone. If you were to take a good look at your family's schedule, sleep probably wouldn't even make the to-do list. It's a part of our lives, but not important enough to prioritize. But the truth is that it's alarming how little most people know about the life-ruining and mood-threatening consequences of not getting enough sleep. Couples don't realize that research has clearly identified bad sleeping habits as a major cause of marital distress. And our contemporary zeal for cutting back on sleep has consequences for our children as well.

The evidence, as I will show, is clear that most of us are not getting enough sleep, and this can be dangerous to the family. There is an indisputable connection between insomnia and both your physical and emotional health. How well you sleep can even affect how long you will live. And if you are a person of faith, healthy sleep habits have a lot to offer your spirituality. God has designed into us a need for sleep, as He has for all of nature. No person or creature is exempt.

But diagnosis without a remedy is never helpful. Just identifying your sleep issues isn't enough. The primary purpose of this book is to help you create healthier sleep attitudes and habits in your whole family. We can all sleep well again; we can all learn to fall asleep in a timely fashion and then stay asleep. It doesn't matter how long you have been in the grip of some insomniac monster; you can rebuild healthy sleep habits if you want to. If I didn't believe there was a solution to our



struggle with sleep, I wouldn't bother to write this book. I've been there, done that. I resolved my struggle with sleep a long time ago, and it has made all the difference in my life. And it's precisely because I have conquered the beast of sleeplessness that I take this opportunity to share my conquest with you.

This book has three parts: In Part 1, I will lay a foundation of understanding about sleep. Understanding why and how we sleep is essential to remedying any sleep-related problem you or your family might suffer from. Why must we sleep? Why must we dream? What happens when we don't get enough sleep? We will explore the essentials of sleep so as to lay a foundation on which to build healthier sleep patterns.

In Part 2, I will help you diagnose your family's sleep problems and discover why sleep eludes you. Our ability to sleep soundly and adequately is not improving in modern times, but getting worse. The dominant influence of the Internet, including online social networks; cell phones, including texting; endless entertainment options; and much more gobble up our time. And since modern technologies are here to stay and in many ways serve to make life easier, it's imperative that all of us, grandparents included, understand how we can manage these potential sleep killers. Identifying the sleep-robbing habits and customs in both ourselves and our children, and knowing how to recognize the major sleep disorders, will open the door to effective solutions.

In Part 3, I will present ways to help improve your and your family's sleeping habits. I will lay out some key strategies for fixing your sleep problems, including when and how to use sleep aids, managing your family's "sleep bank," and protecting your marriage from the harm that comes from sleep-deprived irritability, intolerance, and sheer nastiness.

Feel free to read each part straight through or to skip around and find those areas that are of most interest to you. The fact is that sleep is vitally important for all of us, and my goal here is to help you move the priority of healthy sleep to the top of your and your family's agenda.

Because you've picked up this book, I know your desire is to improve the sleep habits of your family, and I applaud you for taking this first step. Being well informed about how you and your family can sleep better can only open the door to a healthier life together.

**PART 1**

# **UNDERSTANDING YOUR FAMILY'S NEED FOR SLEEP**



# So Your Family Can't Sleep!

*A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by one after one;  
the sound of rain, and bees murmuring;  
the fall of rivers, winds and seas, . . .  
I've thought of all by turns, and still I lie Sleepless . . .*

*Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,  
And could not win thee, Sleep! By any stealth:  
So do not let me wear tonight away:  
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?*  
—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, "TO SLEEP"

The call from Todd's school counselor came out of the blue. Fortunately Melissa, mother of 15-year-old Todd, was at home that morning. She wasn't feeling well and had taken the day off to rest.

"Mrs. Andrews, I am sorry to have to call you at home, but there is a problem with Todd's schoolwork that I need to talk to you about. When can we meet?"

Melissa had no idea that there was anything amiss. She called her husband, Jim, at work. "There's a problem with Todd at school, and the counselor wants to talk to us. . . . No, I have no idea what it's about; just tell me when you can be available so we can go see the counselor."

The counselor came right to the point. "I've received several reports

from Todd's teachers that he falls asleep at his desk on a regular basis. They've tried chiding him, but it doesn't seem to be getting better. You need to look into the problem. Maybe he has a sleep disorder," the counselor suggested.

Jim and Melissa confronted Todd as soon as he came home from school. "It's no big deal. It's only happened a couple of times," he replied, dismissing the issue. But Melissa and Jim insisted on getting some help and came to my office for counseling.

At first, I met with only Jim and Melissa. I suggested they do a sleep assessment for Todd and gave them some tests to fill out, not unlike the assessment forms I'll present later. "And," I said, "please check Todd's cell phone records and see how often he uses his phone at night."

"Cell phone records?" Both seemed taken aback.

"Yes," I said, "cell phone records. Something must be keeping him awake until very late if you are sending him to bed at a reasonable hour. Trust me."

We soon found out that Todd had been text-messaging his friends until the early hours of the morning. He did it in the dark, under the covers, so his parents wouldn't know. It appeared that he was falling asleep around three o'clock most mornings, presumably from sheer exhaustion. He'd have kept going till sunrise otherwise. Todd did not have a sleep disorder—only lax family supervision! Welcome to the average American family.

## **A Sleepless Family**

As a clinical psychologist, I also counsel couples with marital problems. I've seen a dramatic increase recently in marital conflicts that can be traced back to sleep problems. While we'll tackle the subject of marriage and sleep further in a later chapter, let's take a closer look at Melissa and Jim as an example. Aside from Todd's school problems, they had started

having marital problems. Melissa was astute enough to link it to sleep deprivation as well. “We’re becoming a sleepless family,” she told me.

Melissa’s main concern was with Jim. He had recently taken on a senior position at his company and was working longer and harder than ever before. It was not the hard work that was bothering her; she was confident he could handle that. But she had noticed subtle changes in his personality that had been upsetting her. He was becoming more irritable, less patient, and at times, even morose. Jim and Melissa had always prided themselves in having good communication skills as a couple, but lately Melissa just couldn’t get a word through to him. What was most painful for Melissa was that their children had started to notice the change in their family atmosphere and were avoiding Jim because “he wasn’t nice to be around anymore!”

As the three of us sat together in my office, Melissa said, “Jim isn’t coming to bed as early as he did before. He seems restless and wants to stay up late. He keeps saying he’s not ready for bed. And it’s not that he’s preoccupied with work or working on a project. It seems he just wants to veg out and watch TV or play on his computer. He calls it his ‘down-time,’ but it seems more like ‘up time’ to me.”

Jim didn’t deny any of her complaints. “Things have changed. Now that I’m the senior manager, I have more things to worry about. When I’m home, I need a break and some personal time.”

With a few focused questions it became clear that Jim was also beginning to experience some health problems—problems that are often related to sleep difficulties. Most notable were the headaches that came on as soon as he got home from work. In a recent physical exam his doctor had noted that Jim was gaining weight, his cholesterol levels were high, his blood pressure was elevated, and there were signs he was pre-diabetic. Jim just shrugged off these concerns and said, “I’ll worry about those things later.”

Research has shown a link between poor sleep habits and sleep

apnea, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and even strokes, so I knew we needed to explore further Jim's sleep patterns.<sup>1</sup> Sure enough, Jim admitted that he was now only sleeping about four or five hours a night, sometimes staying awake all night—or so it felt. I finally convinced him that he was living dangerously, and not only was his family life suffering, but his spiritual life was as well. He no longer took time to pray and was usually too tired to attend church with his family. "I'm just too busy for all that," was his excuse.

By this time, Melissa was also taking a closer look at their older daughter Amanda's sleeping habits. Amanda was a freshman away at college. Bright and always at the top of her class, she couldn't quite explain why her studies suddenly weren't going well. I provided a sleep-assessment questionnaire and determined quickly that Amanda was clearly not getting sufficient sleep to facilitate any effective learning. There were many distractions: She liked staying up late with her friends; she had joined a chorale group that practiced until late in the evening, and when she finally got back to her room, homework was waiting for her attention; her roommate also had bad sleeping habits; and so on. On top of all this, Amanda had fallen into the habit of spending hours on her laptop at night, chatting online with her friends.

Fortunately, Melissa and Jim took their therapy seriously, and while progress was slow, the marriage was saved and the kids eventually got on the road to right sleep. I can't say that every situation I've dealt with has always been that life transforming, but I can assure you that with determination and discipline, your family can change their sleep habits, and with that, change your life for the better.

### **My Passionate Embrace of Sleep**

Of the many reasons why I chose to write this book, one stands out above all others: Bad sleeping habits in either children or parents can

have a devastating effect on the spiritual, emotional, and physical health of the whole family.

Before I plunge too deeply into our understanding of sleep and sleep disorders, allow me to share some of my personal sleep journey with you. It was 28 years ago that I first became interested in sleep research and suspected I was sleep deprived. I had just become the dean of the graduate school of psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary, but I continued my research in the area of stress and stress-related disorders. Because I am somewhat of a driven person, and academia can be a “publish or perish” environment, continuing my research and writing was imperative.

Sleeping only about six hours a night in those days, I was struggling to get my writing done, felt a perpetual grogginess, and developed high blood pressure. I was preparing to publish the first edition of my book *The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress*, and had decided to include a chapter on sleep. Not much had been written about sleeplessness to that point. While there were those who were beginning to sound the alarm that we were losing our grip on sleep, by and large the idea was that sleeping too much could actually shorten your life, not prolong it. People were trying to find ways to stay awake, not get more sleep.

Up to that point in my life, therefore, my strategy was to try to get by with less sleep. My father only slept about six hours a night, and my brother, two years younger and a successful businessman, only slept for about four or five hours. We were pretty much a sleep-as-little-as-you-can clan.

My brother ran his own trucking business in South Africa and told me many times that the only way he could be successful in his business was to sleep as little as possible. Trucks had to work all night, and breakdowns were frequent. Customers expected on-time deliveries and accepted no excuses. So he became caffeine dependent, probably providing that industry with half its annual profits all by himself! Whereas



he had chosen a business career, I eventually became a psychologist, went into academia, and immigrated to the USA.

My brother and I had always been very competitive. He boasted that he would be a millionaire before me. I responded by saying I would publish more books than he would. We both tried to eliminate sleep so we could pursue our dreams.

Then stark reality stepped in. My brother had his first heart attack. His doctor had warned him that he was working himself to death. He nearly died. I was struggling to write and research, but creativity seemed to elude me. I would go to my office to deal with all the hassles of running an academic program; then I'd go home and hit my typewriter. (This was before word processors!) I would normally get a chapter done before midnight, then crash into bed. I tossed and turned most of the night. And when I came back to that chapter the next day, it was all-too-often worthless.

So I began to explore some of the emerging research on sleeplessness. The message was clear: Lack of sleep produced more stress, not less. Sleeping less was a handicap, not a mark of superiority over other mortals. I learned that sleep isn't just a time to rest weary bodies, but it serves a whole constellation of functions, not the least of which is creative thinking. So I tried an experiment on myself. I reversed my strategy. Why not skip trying to write at night? I decided to try getting to bed early and then doing some writing the next morning, before going to the office.

Obviously, there was some trepidation here. I feared that taking more time to sleep would mean less time for my work. Surely, I thought, this would only make matters worse. But I went ahead and took the plunge. My secretary rearranged my appointments to start later in the morning after I had spent the first few hours reaping the benefits of a good night's sleep and then getting some writing done.

It only took a few days to convince me of the two principles I have

followed ever since. First, getting to bed earlier, and as a consequence getting more sleep, works wonders for my brain. Second, creative tasks are best accomplished earlier in the day, rather than later. As I explain in my book *The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress*, your creativity is highest when your adrenaline arousal is at its lowest.<sup>2</sup> My fear that spending more time sleeping would mean reduced time to do my work, and hence lower my productivity, was not justified. In fact, as I slowly increased my sleep time, to my amazement my efficiency and productivity increased. The time I lost by adding more sleep time was more than compensated for by my being able to work and write more efficiently. I made far fewer mistakes. My ideas came more easily. I completed my tasks faster.

And I have been a sleep propagandist ever since. I teach it; I preach it. And now, as we will see, there is abundant research evidence to support my contention that the benefits of getting more sleep are more than compensated for by improved efficiency. I have proven over and over again that when I am well rested, I am at my best in every sense—even as a husband, as my wife will attest. This can be true for you as well. As we go through this book together, I'll help you determine the right amount of sleep for yourself and your family. So keep reading!

## **Sleep Is Essential to a Full Life**

As I lay the foundation for understanding sleep, there is an important point I need to stress up front—and it's really a theological one. I cannot get away from the belief that God has designed sleep into us as a fundamental need, as fundamental as eating food and breathing air. In ancient times this need was more clearly understood. But in our modern times, the need for sleep is often misunderstood and even dismissed as unimportant by many, including some in the medical establishment.

One of the severest insomniac patients I have ever seen was a

physician who abused his sleep patterns. He shared with me once that he believed sleep was some sort of evolutionary mistake; that we really don't need as much sleep as we think we need. Unfortunately, his sleep deprivation led to a severe addiction problem. To this day, I don't think he has resolved his addiction to self-prescribed drugs and alcohol.

Since it's so important in shaping our sleep attitudes, let me drive the "fundamental need" point home a little further. Sleep is not an evolutionary accident, as some would make out. God designed sleep to be an essential drive in nature. All nature sleeps. Even trees sleep in the winter months. Their sleep cycle is one year, unlike ours, which is one day. Some animals sleep all winter. Imagine what would happen if they all rebelled and refused to hibernate for the winter! Right now it's winter-time where I live, and my whole garden has gone to sleep! It's drab and brown—a literal eyesore. But I know that it will awaken in the spring and be beautiful once again.

Even though many millions of us are tired every day and know that we are not getting enough sleep, we turn a blind eye to it. Why is this? The answer is that, for the most part, we tend to associate sleeping long with laziness.

There's another reason why people avoid sleep, and it's one most of us can easily understand. Resting in bed while waiting to fall asleep often gives people time to think about things they'd rather forget. Sometimes the only time available for worry is when we lie down to sleep. A client recently shared this with me: "As long as I can run around and be as busy as a bee, nothing bothers me. But the moment I lie down to go to sleep, my mind becomes active and wants to revisit every moment of the day and find more for me to worry about. I hate going to bed. It's the worst time of my day!"

Although many questions about the role of sleep remain unanswered, scientific studies have shown that sleep contributes significantly to several important cognitive, emotional, and performance-related

functions. We'll take a closer look at this throughout the book. Sleep is, in essence, the food the brain needs to survive, and not getting sufficient sleep is like starving your brain—it can be harmful, even life threatening. In short, sleep is essential to a full, rich, and satisfying life.

### **Some Sleep Problems Are Common— and Dangerous**

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) has conducted many polls over the past several decades exploring the incidence of sleep problems in adults, women, teenagers, and children. They report that about 70 million Americans suffer from some sort of sleep disorder. But that's only part of the problem. Many others suffer from some form of periodic sleep deprivation. These people have developed disruptive sleep or lifestyle habits that interfere with their normal sleep cycles.

Sleep deficits have been implicated in many major public catastrophes, including the oil spill of the Exxon Valdez and the destruction of the space shuttle Challenger. The nuclear accident at Chernobyl was also blamed on sleep deprivation, as were the near nuclear accidents at the Three Mile Island and Peach Bottom reactor sites.

Beyond these catastrophic consequences, the NSF polls have revealed that the cost of sleepiness to everyday humans is also astonishing. For example, each year there are more than 30,000 deaths from car accidents linked to sleepiness, and more than three million disabling injuries result from sleep-related accidents. Now I realize that I've taken quite a bit of space here to drive home the seriousness of our sleep problem. But I do so because it is important that we understand its seriousness.

A poll by the NSF in 2000 also estimated that an astounding 62 percent of American adults (basically, two out of every three of us) were not getting the amount and quality of sleep that their bodies and minds

require. When repeated in 2005, the poll showed that this figure had risen to 75 percent. And by all accounts, it's still growing. According to the NSF, three out of every four American adults now have a sleep problem of one sort or another. The following figure gives us an idea of the percentages of people suffering from symptoms of insomnia.<sup>3</sup>

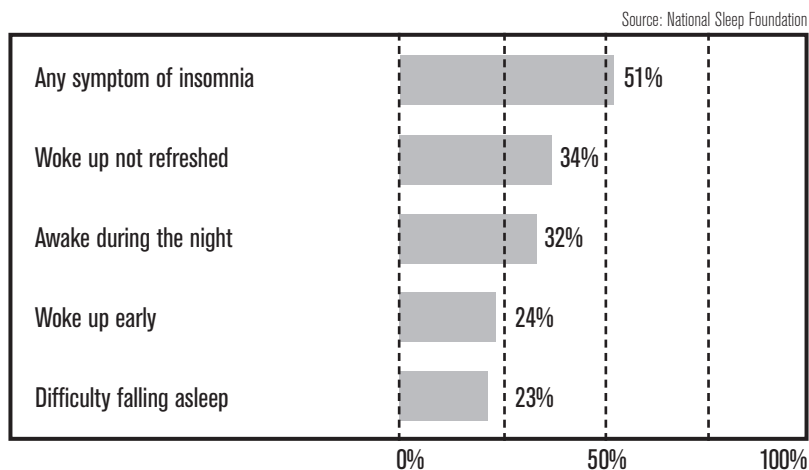


FIGURE 1: Percentage of Adults Who Suffer from Insomnia

## Consequences of Sleep Deprivation

Let's take a closer look at the effect of sleep deprivation on the family. In a fascinating and informative segment on *60 Minutes* called "The Sleep Crisis" (March 30, 2004), Dan Rather reported that their review of sleep research showed that the lack of sleep was taking a heavy toll on American families. Children, toddlers, and even infants have the most to lose if they are sleep deprived. "Because we live in a 24/7 world, sleep is no longer a priority for the average American," he stated. And he's right. I would go a step further and say that not only is sleeping a low priority for many, but we have lost our respect for it. In other words, sleep has become an intrusive obstacle in our lives.

So what happens if a family doesn't get enough sleep? Our sleep loss can affect how we crouch, stoop, push or pull large objects, handle small objects, write with a pen, learn new things, remember old things, gain weight, walk up stairs . . . and the list goes on and on! As I go through an abbreviated list, note any you or your family might be suffering from.

Sleep deprived people:

- lose their ability to be joyful, lighthearted, and happy;
- tend to become irritable and negative;
- are at increased risk for accidents (a friend of mine crashed into the back of a garbage truck once, after a sleepless night);
- show a dramatic reduction in creativity and productivity;
- have memory problems;
- have disordered social relationships; and
- have a greater risk for divorce. (Sleeplessness aggravates our brain's anger center and disrupts marital relationships.)

On the physical side, even more serious health problems for family members are associated with sleep deprivation. A major study that epitomizes the gravity of our modern-day sleep deprivation reports that reduced sleep carries a greater mortality risk than smoking, high blood pressure, and heart disease.<sup>4</sup> Take a moment for that to sink in. Lack of sleep reduces your coping ability, so you become more stressed—with stress often comes elevated blood pressure, cholesterol, and so on. And stress is also a sleep disrupter, so it's a no-win situation.

According to the Institute of Medicine, the cumulative long-term effects of sleep loss and sleep disorders are associated with a wide range of serious health consequences, including a higher risk for:

- hypertension (particularly connected to sleep apnea),
- diabetes,
- obesity,
- depression,
- heart attacks, and strokes.<sup>5</sup>

Further evidence that sleep deprivation is damaging to the family comes from what we pay for it. According to the U.S. National Commission on Sleep Disorders, almost 20 percent of all serious car crash injuries in the general population are associated with driver sleepiness, and that does not even take into account the sleepiness felt by those driving under the influence of alcohol. They also commissioned a study to determine the direct cost of accidents that result from sleep deprivation. The results were staggering. In the year studied, the cost of motor vehicle accidents in the U.S. that were attributed to sleepiness was more than \$56 billion. And consider the fact that every crash victim was a member of a family somewhere.

Every parent knows that when small children don't get enough sleep, the whole family pays the price for their crankiness. This applies to Mom and Dad, too. When Dad insists on catching the late-night TV show and Mom can't put down her favorite novel until the early hours of the morning, they invariably get into an argument the next day. Missing out on sleep destabilizes the mood of the whole family. Show me a sleep-deprived family and I will show you a disorganized, unhappy family.

Even sleep-deprived babies can influence a family's well-being. In extreme cases, the crying and frustration of an exhausted baby can raise anger levels in parents that regrettably can lead to child abuse. It's well known that child sleeplessness can also lead to an increased risk of depression and anxiety in mothers, and a reciprocal loss of love feelings toward the child.<sup>6</sup> So you see, child sleeplessness affects not only children but the whole family system. I am sure that every parent reading this book has experienced (and remembers well) the profound effects of crying newborns—and that's only the beginning of the sleep challenge. (We'll offer more help on this important subject in chapter 9.)

Of course, those nights with a crying newborn don't last forever. But sleeplessness continues to plague children with learning disabilities, stress, and attention deficit or hyperactivity disorders when they get

older. Sleep problems follow them into older childhood and the teen years with devastating effects on family life. This is perhaps the most compelling reason why sleep habits and sleep disorders should be prominently featured in the training of those involved in the health care of children, such as pediatricians, child psychologists, school counselors, and psychiatrists.<sup>7</sup> It's best to establish healthful sleep habits early.

### **“We Have Become a Nation of Insomniacs”**

So says Mary Sykes Wylie, columnist for *Psychotherapy Networker*, a journal for mental health professionals.<sup>8</sup> “If a vast conspiracy were afoot to create an entire civilization of insomniacs,” she says, “it would operate pretty much the way our society does now.”

Insomnia. We either deny its existence in our lives or wear it as a badge of honor! For most, it's a dreaded word. But most of us experience it at one time or another. The nights spent staring at the ceiling counting minutes, or sheep, or whatever; desperately wanting to get some slumber time; worrying about how you will feel or perform the next day. The tossing and turning . . . waking up, then falling asleep, then waking up again. Finally, morning comes and you struggle to get out of bed, but a heavy cloud seems to follow you through the day. Your afternoons are spent in a daze. Basically, you're ready to fall asleep on the job at the slightest opportunity. And then there's the inevitable groping your way to the coffee machine or nearest “caffeine den” to get your java fix. Woe betides anyone in shouting range if the pot is empty or the shop closed.

What a grim life insomnia offers! And even though we all make choices every day that affect our ability or inability to sleep, there are other, more encompassing, reasons for exhaustion as well. Researchers blame cultural, sociological, and economic factors for turning what used to be transitory episodes of sleeplessness into a condition of chronic insomnia that now plagues the lives of many.



## Types of Insomnia

Now let's look more specifically at the more common sleep disorders. Insomnia, the most common sleep disorder, can be grouped according to the cause, frequency, and duration of the problem, or how the sleep disturbance is experienced.

- *Primary insomnia* is when your difficulty in sleeping is *not* caused by another condition, such as an illness, or a drug, food, or drink. If you have the flu or a cold and you have difficulty sleeping because your nasal system makes it difficult for you to breathe, this is not primary insomnia.
- *Secondary insomnia* is a sleep disturbance that is caused by another problem such as illness, chronic pain, caffeine, or tobacco use. We all suffer periodically from bouts of secondary insomnia. It goes away when we treat the underlying condition.
- Difficulty falling asleep at bedtime
  - Termed "sleep-onset insomnia" (the sleep switch isn't working properly)
  - Defined as requiring more than half an hour, on average, to fall asleep
- Waking up and lying awake during the night
  - Termed "sleep-maintenance insomnia"
  - Example: regularly lying awake during the night for a half hour or longer after having already slept for a while
- Waking up too early in the morning
  - Termed "sleep-terminal insomnia"
  - Often occurs in disorders such as depression and anxiety, or when you anticipate a heavy new day.
- Waking up tired because sleep is not restful

## A Simple Sleep Test

How can you know if you are sleeping well? It's quite simple. Here are the signs of a well-rested body. See how many of them apply to you:

- You should have fallen asleep within half an hour of going to bed.
- If your sleep was disturbed, you should have been able to fall asleep again quickly.
- You should be waking up every morning at about the same time and feeling refreshed and alert.
- You should not be waking up wishing you could go back to sleep again.
- You should not have to use an alarm clock to wake up. (By all means set one up as a backup.)
- You should not be waking up with a headache or a feeling of fuzziness.
- While you might feel like taking a nap at noon, the feeling should quickly pass away.
- You should not feel sleepy at any other time of the day.
- You should be able to fall asleep again without difficulty the next evening.

If this does not describe your typical sleep habits, your sleep routine may be ready for a sleep makeover! However, you may also be suffering from an unrecognized sleep disorder. I will explore these with you later in the book, so that you can build healthier sleep routines for yourself and your family.

Most researchers agree that our society is now so chronically sleep deprived that even a small reduction in your normal sleep time can have serious consequences for the safety of yourself and others in your family. Fifty years ago, if you lost a few hours sleep a night for a few days, you could quickly recover. Today, you can't afford to lose even five minutes of your precious sleep time without a penalty. One researcher confirmed this by showing that even the small shift in our annual daylight savings time (DST) can have a major impact on car accident rates. Using data from two years of Canadian traffic accident records, he found that on the Monday following the shift to DST in the spring (when we lose an hour's sleep), there was an increase in the traffic accident rate of about 7 percent. In the fall (when we get an extra hour of sleep), there was a decrease in the accident rate of about the same magnitude.<sup>9</sup>

### **How Much Sleep Do We Need?**

In 1960, a study by the American Cancer Society asked one million Americans how much sleep they were getting each night. It turns out that the median was 8 hours. Today the median time spent sleeping has fallen to 6.7 hours, and it's dropping by the month! This means that there has been a decrease of more than 15 percent in our sleep time, in less than my children's lifetime.

The 1995 report of the National Commission on Sleep Disorders recommended that the average person should get a minimum of 7.5 to 8 hours of sleep a night.<sup>10</sup> No recent studies have disputed this. Please note that this was the minimum sleep duration recommended for a healthy adult.

Now, with this clarification, we come to the million-dollar question: "How much sleep do we really need?" The answer is not all that straightforward. While we have general limits, the amount of sleep needed can vary from person to person, and also from circumstance to

circumstance. So this means that we must discover for ourselves the most appropriate length of sleep needed.

For instance, someone going through a time of high stress may need more sleep, while someone on vacation, after having made up for his or her accumulated sleep loss, may then need less sleep than normal. Also, someone studying for an exam should intentionally get more sleep, as well as someone who is fighting an infectious disease. Generally I need 9 hours of bedtime. When I am stressed I go to 10. If I am traveling or doing a conference and feel energized, my sleep need may drop back to 8 hours. Then after I get home from a conference, it may lengthen to 9.5 or even 10, as my brain and body recover from the overloaded activity.

So how can you determine how much sleep you need? I'll provide a simple strategy for this, which can also be used to help your children personalize their ideal sleep period.

First, there's one important point to keep in mind. If you're aiming for 8 hours of sleep, remember that this means actual sleeping time. To achieve a minimum of 8 hours of sleep, you have to be in bed for longer than 8 hours. You need time to wind down and start the sleep process. It could take 15 minutes, or it could take 45 minutes. So if you can only afford to be in bed for 8 hours, you will not be getting 8 hours of actual sleep. You need to plan on adding an additional 20 or 30 minutes to your bedtime.

The strategy for determining how much sleep time you really need involves slowly adding incremental amounts of sleep, while observing the benefits. It has to be done in small increments, say 15 minutes, to allow your brain to adjust its sleep-time clock. Here's how to do it, for yourself and your family:

1. For the first week, add 15 minutes of sleep time to your normal sleep. You can do so by going to bed 15 minutes earlier, or by setting your alarm clock for 15 minutes later. Don't worry if you just lie there

awake. Stay in bed so that your brain gets the message. After one week, evaluate how the change affects you. At first, adding extra sleep time can have a rebound effect—it may make you feel more tired. This is because your brain is rebelling and asking for more, not less. At the end of the week, evaluate your level of tiredness upon awakening, energy, efficiency, alertness, mental acuity, reduced daytime tiredness, and your general feeling of well-being.

2. You may not feel much different the first week, but continue for the second week anyway, adding a second 15 minutes to your sleep—up front or in the morning. This now means an added half hour of sleep. Continue this for the second week, and evaluate its effects at the end. You should begin to feel the benefits, even if only slightly.

3. Now continue with the next 15 minutes and repeat the process. The plan is to do this until you have reached at least the nine-hour sleep mark. Now you will have a better idea of what amount of sleep your body and mind really need. If the benefits peaked at eight and a half hours, then stick with that for a while. If nine hours, then go with that and make the necessary lifestyle changes to support it.

It takes time for your brain to change its habits, so give it time to adjust after each change. Once you have found your most effective sleep duration, stick with it for at least the next three months so that it becomes an established habit.

## **Parents Need to Take Control**

There is one closing point I feel I must make before I put this chapter to bed. (I couldn't resist the pun!) It is imperative that parents step up to the plate and take control of their family's sleeping habits. Our children are facing enormous increases in their general stimulation. They are forced to multitask in ways that undermine effective learning, and they generally have too much excitement in their lives.<sup>11</sup> Without disciplined

supervision, sleep loss will take its toll on our precious offspring. Consider the fact that in 2008 the *Washington Post* reported that naptime was increasingly becoming “a luxury that 4-year-olds can no longer afford.”<sup>12</sup> Many schools were eliminating naps from the kindergarten curriculum so that the recovered 45 minutes could be devoted to learning, oblivious to the neurological consequences.

The truth is that healthful sleep habits do not come about by chance; they must be taught. Animals have the advantage in that they are largely driven by instinct, and nature will see to it that they get the sleep they need. But humans are not instinct driven. We require discipline and training. Without careful tutoring here and, if I may say it, modeling by parents, our children will be the losers.

To make matters worse, many of the wonderful gadgets we have today are not always sleep friendly. And while things such as cell phones, computers, and even video games can hold positive benefits for families, without moderation, they can also serve as a detriment. A recent study has reported that the most common reason why teens are excessively sleepy during school time is that they spend a lot of time, often into the early hours of the morning, talking, text-messaging, or twittering friends.<sup>13</sup> This study, as reported in *Time* magazine, concluded that “a good night’s sleep is rapidly becoming more elusive for the average American.” Please understand that I’m *not* saying we need to get rid of cell phones or other useful items. I *am* saying that we must use our time wisely, and that means valuing sleep enough to give it the time it deserves.

My point is this: The family that sleeps well, lives well.

## Appendix A Sleep Diary—Part One

COMPLETE IN THE MORNING

Date:	Went to bed at:	Fell asleep at:	Got out of bed at:	Woke up (times):	Feeling on waking:	Total time slept:	My sleep was disturbed by:
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
					Refreshed? Tired?		
Comments:							

## Appendix B Sleep Diary—Part Two

COMPLETE IN THE EVENING BEFORE GOING TO BED

Date:	When did you drink caffeine?	What medications did you take?	When did you exercise?	What did you eat 2 hrs. before bed?	What did you do before bed?
Comments:					



## Appendix C

# Assembling Your Sleep Aid Package

Go to your nearest drug store and purchase the following items that can serve as your Sleep Aid Package:

1. Eye mask (black and light proof)
2. Earplugs (the soft-gel type are the best)
3. A night-light (or small flashlight so you can get up without turning on the light)
4. An aroma spray (like lavender or whatever you find comforting and relaxing)
5. Lip balm (to prevent lips from drying out)
6. Hand cream (soothing and cooling to the skin)
7. Essential medications:
  - Painkiller (for headaches and so on)
  - Cough drops (throat dries out at night)
  - Decongestant (runny nose). However, decongestants should only be used on a short-term basis for nasal stuffiness, as they may cause insomnia in some people.
8. Clock (lit so it is visible in darkness)
9. Sleepytime tea (or other non-caffeine-based beverage to hydrate your body)
10. Music player (or iPod), with ear phones, for playing relaxing music

## Appendix D

# How to Order Dr. Hart's Relaxation Training and Relaxing Sounds Audio CDs

The *Relaxation and Christian Meditation* audio CD is designed to do four things:

1. It will develop your ability to rapidly produce a deep state of muscle relaxation, called the relaxation response. This response minimizes your body's stress-arousal systems, including your adrenaline, cortisol, and other sad messengers, and maximizes your brain's happy and sedating messengers.

2. It will teach you how to warm your hands as a way of switching off your fight-or-flight response. The cold hands and cold feet phenomena are particularly prevalent in those who are stressed, and they easily trigger the adrenaline response.

3. It will teach you how to take control of your thoughts and redirect them in times of worry or high anxiety into more constructive channels. Included in this section will be training in how to "cut off" your worrying.

4. Lastly, it will provide you with ways you can enhance your sensory awareness of what is going on around you, and it offers Christian-based meditation exercises. Not only will these exercises help you to become more focused on God and His Word, but they will assist you in becoming more prayerful and conscious of God's presence.

Together, these exercises are widely accepted in the sleep research community as being helpful in enhancing sleep hygiene.

The *Relaxing Sounds* audio CD provides one hour of soft, soothing sounds you can listen to as you relax or meditate. One part of the CD provides a period of gentle wind chimes; the other, ocean wave sounds.

The *Relaxation and Christian Meditation* audio CD, with the booklet to guide the user, is available from Dr. Hart for \$15, including postage.

The *Relaxing Sounds* audio CD costs \$12, including postage.

To aid in shipping, write your name and address on a three-by-five-inch card or piece of paper (serves as a mailing label) and send it with your check to:

Dr. Archibald Hart  
1042 Cyrus Lane  
Arcadia, CA 91006

### **Other Helpful Resources by Dr. Hart**

*A Women's Guide to Overcoming Depression* (written with daughter Dr. Catherine Hart Weber) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007)

*Helping Children Survive Divorce* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997)

*Safe Haven Marriage* (written with daughter Dr. Sharon Hart May) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003)

*Secrets of Eve* (written with daughter Dr. Catherine Hart Weber) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998)

*Stressed or Depressed: Teen Depression* (written with Dr. Catherine Hart Weber) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005)

*The Anxiety Cure* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001)

*The Sexual Man* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995)

*Unmasking Male Depression* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001)

*Thrilled to Death: How the Endless Pursuit of Pleasure Is Leaving Us Numb* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007)

Details are available at Dr. Hart's Web site: [www.hartinstitute.com](http://www.hartinstitute.com).

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