

SLEEP PROGRAM (MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Clock with easily visible time readout.

Pad and paper.

An easy meditation (a pleasant and rather detailed scene or

sequence of imagined scenes involving a familiar setting, perhaps a nice vacation).

time 5-10min.

A difficult meditation (a list of sequences of action or observations of a highly complex scene with lots of detail, for example, going for an imagined walk around your neighborhood).

time 10-12min.

The Procrastinated Task. This is the most important element of the program. It has no time limits (not like baking a cake). It is not pleasurable (not like reading novels or watching TV). It is relatively quiet, and disturbs no one else in the household very much (not like vacuuming). It is something you **SHOULD** be doing for your own good and betterment, but somehow keep putting off or procrastinating. Examples include: sorting out old files and accounts, writing letters to relatives, reading professional journals and textbooks, learning a foreign language, hand-sanding antique furniture, etc.

METHOD FOR FALLING ASLEEP:

Follow proper sleep hygiene procedures re exercise wind-down, dietary intake tapering, lowering slope on body temperature. lowering activation level, reducing demands and stress, allowing relax time, etc. For people with entrenched (over 3 months) sleep disorders, even watching TV or reading may be too stimulating while preparing to go to sleep. If you must read or watch TV, do it away from the bedroom.

The bedroom is a restricted area. Tell your roommate or partner it is not to be used for computer work, study, discussion, problem solving, or any heavy agenda. The bedroom is to be used only for loving conversations, cuddling, etc., and sleeping.

Another aspect of sleep hygiene is refraining from attempting to problem solve business matters, relationship conflicts, or any other logical, analytic activity whenever lying in bed. If you want to analyze a problem, go to another room in the house. Remember, problems are amazingly loyal. They will be there tomorrow, so don't even try to solve them at night during sleeping hours. Whatever thinking you do should be dedicated to imagining seeing, hearing, and feeling sensations in random or guided imagery.

At the beginning of going to bed to sleep, write down the exact time of night (e.g., 11:02). Spend the next 15min. allowing your mind to drift where it wants (except, no problem solving allowed). If you fall asleep within this frame, go ahead and rest. Merely record your next time awake (say 2:15) and begin the Sleep Pause Procedure, described later in this program.

If still awake (by 11:17), move on to the next stage.

Now begin the **easy meditation stage**. Continue for a max of 10min. When you check, if the time awake is after that (11:28 in our example), move on to the next stage.

Now you begin the **difficult meditation during the next 10-12min.** If you fall asleep before the end of this frame, merely allow that sleep and record your next time awake (say 2:15) and begin the same procedure.

If you continue awake through the Difficult Meditation, stay with it for 10-12 min. (11:40 tops). If you still can remain awake, get out of bed right away and move on to The Procrastinated Task.

Write down time (11:40). Begin and sustain **Procrastinated Task** until you nod off, fall unconscious, can no longer remain awake.

When you are aware that you have reached or gone beyond your limit of wakefulness, return to bed, but remember to record the time (say 2:02 a.m.).

SLEEP PAUSE PROCEDURE:

Record the time you go back to bed or awaken from sleep. Recycle the same sequence: 15 minutes letting your mind wander, then 10 minutes of the easy meditation, then 10 minutes of the difficult meditation. If still awake after that, get out of bed and resume the Procrastinated Task. Continue with it until you can no longer stay awake. Repeat this regime throughout the night until your designated wake-up time.

Follow this program exactly, and expect to be sleeping better within 4 days. Allow several weeks of this process to occur for the pattern of regular sleep cycles to develop a habit.

Frank D. Young Ph.D., R. Psych. 935 Eastwicke Cres. Comox, BC V9M 1B2

Ph: 250-941-1535 Email: dr.frank@shaw.ca Website: solutionorientedcounselling.ca