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**THE THREE OBSTACLES BETWEEN YOU AND SLEEP AND APPLYING THE SLEEPER METHOD**

You are not alone when asking yourself ‘why can’t I sleep well anymore?’ and wondering if your situation is ever going to improve. You may feel that no matter what you do or how hard you try, you simply cannot achieve a decent night’s sleep.

There are three main obstacles to finding long term good sleep. In this chapter we will outline each obstacle and learn how to remove them over the remaining chapters of the manual.

**Obstacle One: Your behaviour. Why is my behaviour an obstacle?**

When you constantly repeat a negative behavioural pattern, this very act reinforces and embeds the negative behaviour. And so it is with your relationship with your sleep. If you repeat the same negative behaviour, the same actions, you will always get the same results.

**What do we mean by ‘behaviour’?**

*Behaviour = who you are*. Behaviour is *your thoughts, what you say, what you believe, what you feel and what you do.* So for the purpose of Sleeper, we can think of our ‘actions’ as our behaviour (who we are).

Most of us live our lives on automatic pilot and we ‘behave’ without consciously thinking about it. From the moment we wake, we begin producing the mental and physical actions (behaviour) that govern the quality of our days and shapes our responses to the events that unfold.

**How do you become your behaviour?**

Through repetition. Every time that you repeat an action, you strengthen your connections to this behaviour, through your brains synapses and neural *pathways*. Synapses are the bodies messaging system, allowing cells to pass an electrical or chemical signal to each another.

A pathway in this instance; is a frequently used messaging route. These pathways began as light connections, but when you perform repeated actions, these pathways thicken and become the main route and connection that the brain will use, to produce your future responses to each event that occurs in your life.

**Retraining your brain for success**

Neuroplasticity is the term used to describe the ability of the brain to change. Your brain is malleable and changeable, throughout your entire life. Neuroscientists have observed that when a new behaviour is consistently practiced, fresh neural pathways are created in the brain. The more you reinforce these new pathways using repeated behaviour, the quicker old behaviour weakens.

A simple analogy for this effect would be as follows: Imagine your mind as a garden covered in waist high grass. There is a summer house at the end of your garden. Every day you take the same route through the long grass, from the top of the garden to the bottom, to your summer house, and in doing so a pathway is created. You use this pathway every day and it becomes well established. But if you stopped using this first path and instead started a new path to the summer house, after a little time the first pathway would no longer be visible and the second pathway would become the new and main path.

**So how does neuroplasticity benefit you?**

We are all creatures of habits, of a set of behaviours that we repeat on a daily basis and so much so that it is who we think we are. We may or may not like coffee, of football, reading or sports. Emotional we respond differently from each other whilst seeing the same thing. This is only learnt behaviour and born out with repetition. In other words, we are simply our habitual behaviour and unless we stop to question what we do and why, and if we are not entirely happy then we can make a choice (allowed by our own free will) to have the permission ro change. And, we can do this whenever we want to. I repeat that we have free will and choice to change our habits whenever we want to.

 It’s a matter of scientific fact that you are able to create new pathways and change the wiring of your brain as long as you consistently maintain your new behaviour. If you consistently journey on this new pathway to your desired behaviour and applying a little self discipline along the way, it will become your dominant behaviour. It only requires the *will* to change, the decision and a commitment from you to make the necessary transformation. And this is the basis for this programme.

**This programme is built around small actions throughout each day, repeating over all of the seven days to create new behaviour and associations with your sleep. Why?**

Every time you repeat an action you form and strengthen your new neural pathways and allow permanent change to happen. So, by following this programmes actions can support you to easily achieve your desired result. Use your new behaviour, new associations, your discipline and will power to commit to seven days of small easy to perform actions, and go from sleeplessness into long term good sleep.

**Can you achieve your goal, even if you don’t initially believe you can change?**

Yes, by applying the idea of ‘Fake it til you make it!’

**Fake it? How?**

By making yourself behave in a new beneficial way, through your actions. Even if it goes against your current thinking, this will create new and positivepathways in your brain. If you consistently repeat your new actions, you retrain your brain and then it will become a reality. The new beneficial behaviour will be the new improved you.

**Obstacle Two: Associations and classic conditioning associations**. **What are associations and classic conditioning?**

Associations are the mental couplings/pairings of individual things placed together. An example that we would all probably recognize is sun = warm. Classic conditioning is when you have formed associations through repeated behaviour. An example of this is, bed = sleep.

**How do you use associations with your sleep?**

Associations are very powerful habits that drive what you do. When you recognize the associations that you are making between yourself and your sleep, then you can use **new** **behaviour** to break free from any old **negative** **associations**. Here is an example of a negative sleep association: **Sleep = Anxiety.**

**How has this negative association blocked your path to sleep?**

If you have conditioned yourself that sleep = fear, then you biologically cannot find sleep when you require it. Our body’s natural biological response to fear is “It is not safe. Stay awake!”

And this is the new positive association that you want to create:

**Sleeper = Sleep.**

**Obstacle Three: Your discipline and will power (your intentions)**

Goals are achieved through the conversion of your thoughts into physical acts. These acts, large or small, create the conditions for your desired outcome to be actualized. In this case, the desire relates to your sleep. Discipline and repetition is the key to obtaining your goal of long term good sleep.

**Why?**

Because you can control your behaviour by simply exerting self discipline and will. When you repeatedly practice this, you become the master of your behaviour.

Your *intention* to succeed has to be stronger that your current habits, otherwise you live a life limited by your current choices that may not benefit you. Imagine how wonderful you will feel a week from now, after following the method. Frequently visualize how great you will feel after sleeping well and awaking refreshed, happy and revitalized. Visualize this image every time an old negative habit tries to reassert itself to sabotage your success.

**How your discipline and will power benefit you**

Once you have the knowledge of what changes you need to obtain good sleep, you *apply* this knowledge through committed *action*. In the Sleeper method, you take many small actions and repeatedly build on them.

Get into a new habit of saying “I *will* do this because it benefits me and I shall obtain my desire for long term good sleep” and then you use your discipline to commit to the programmes actions to make this desire happen.

The difference between success and failure is the *will* to succeed and the discipline to drive the right behaviour to achieve what you desire. This programme provides the method; you provide the desire and the intent to succeed. If you truly desire sleep and are willing to commit just seven days, you can succeed.

Challenge yourself. Manage and monitor your thoughts, apply a touch of will power and you will enjoy good sleep.

**Why following the highly structured programme** **method supports your new actions.**

When we become so sleep deprived, we often don’t want to make small or big changes in our lives, instead relying on what we believe is the easiest or quickest choice, or else stick with our known old habits. We are just too tired. But from the moment you wake, you will be making choices that lead you to good sleep, or create the obstacles that block sleep. The programmes method guides you to make the right decisions and take the correct actions to regain precious sleep.

**Your attitude and intention to succeed**

Every time you work on one of the programmes actions, you are making a firm choice and commitment to obtain good sleep and healthy functioning. So bringing the right positive attitude to the programmes method is really important. Using the next seven days to finding long term good sleep is the equivalent of placing your health and well being first.

The programmes method asks you to query, address and change any negative habits that are preventing good sleep from occurring.

**Make your behaviour, your teacher**

Use your current behaviour as your teacher and learn from it, and then take these teachings to create the changes that you need to find long term good sleep. You become the committed student and the decisive master.