“DEAR DICK” - HEALTHY LIVING

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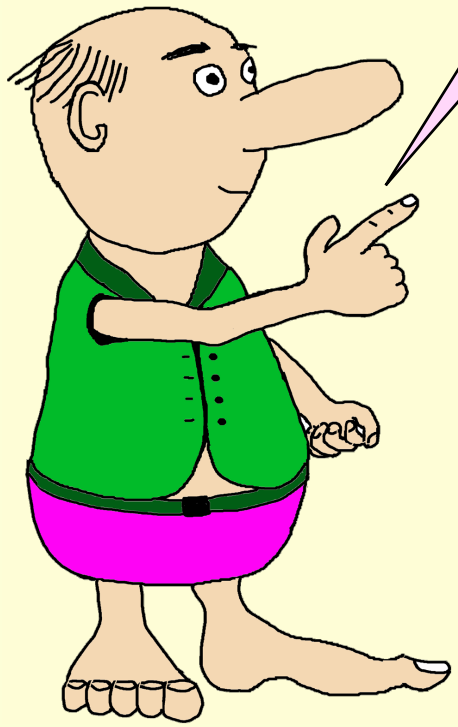
Chapter 1. Sleep



“Quality sleep”
March 2010

Quality sleep is essential to our health and happiness. There are two main reasons why people don’t get enough sleep. The first is they choose not to and the second is that something prevents them.

The amount of sleep that an adult needs varies from person to person. The generally accepted amount is about 8 hours a night. There are many adverse consequences of sleep deprivation. They include poor mental functioning, drowsiness, irritability and impaired judgment. Sleep deprived people are also more prone to have reduced immune function, poor health and depression.

For the people who choose to have reduced sleep, there are many reasons, such as, “So much to do - so little time”. This is so familiar to most of us in our modern society. Another reason might be that sleep gets in the road of having fun.

For those of us who are prevented from getting enough sleep, the causes are either external or internal. The external causes might be a baby not sleeping, environmental noise, shift work disturbing the circadian rhythm. The list goes on.

The internal causes include; excessive worrying, planning and excitement. Using stimulants such as an evening cup of coffee can contribute. There are also medical conditions such as sleep apnea that can mess up our sleep. This list also goes on.

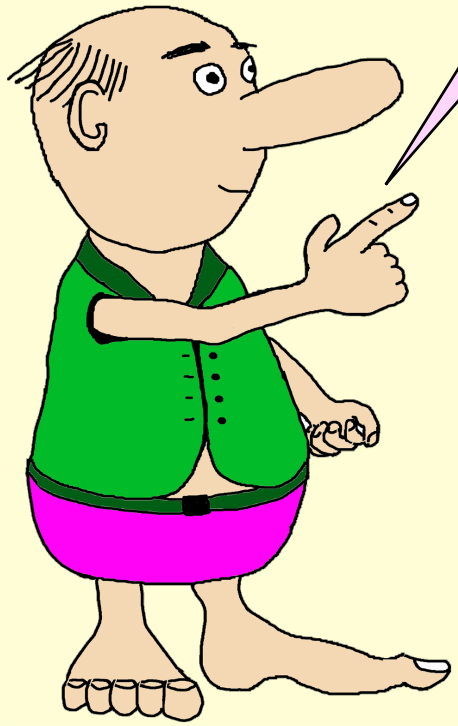
What to do? For the people who choose to go without sleep, my advice is please count the cost of being sleep deprived and change your ways. If not, the consequences can be serious. For example, many car accidents are caused by drivers falling asleep at the wheel.

For those people who have environment factors interfering with their sleep, my advice is to consider what changes you can make. Sometimes tough decisions have to be made for the good of your health and the health of your relationships.

For those people with internal causes, here are some of the things you can do:
1. Get into a regular sleep pattern where lights go out at the same time every night.
2. De-stress yourself before going to bed. A relaxation or sleep tape can be helpful here.
3. Don’t us sleeping pills except in an emergency. They can become habit forming and prevent you from having a healthy sleep.
4. Don’t use chemical stimulants such as caffeine for several hours before sleep.
5. Make sure your sleep environment is the best that it can be.

If you can’t fix it on your own, please get some help.

Chapter 2. Healing the body



“Physical healing”
June 2009

As time goes by, I find myself more and more interested in how psychology can help people with physical ailments. There is so much we don’t know about how the body and the mind interact. From what I read, it appears that interest in this area is growing and our knowledge base is growing with it.

I know many people with chronic physical conditions such as chronic fatigue, arthritis, and many auto immune diseases. I have found that some of these conditions will respond to psychological and energy balancing work.

Of course, our mind and our body are parts of our whole self. But the mind is a very special part. Our conscious and sub conscious mind can influence our physical wellbeing. Alternatively, our physical health can effect our psychological wellbeing.

Most of us accept that psychological problems can lead to physical disorders. For instance, it is well documented that stress lowers the ability of the immune system’s ability to fight disease.

One particular example of the mind’s influence over physical health is called a psychosomatic condition. This is when the subconscious mind actually creates a physical condition.

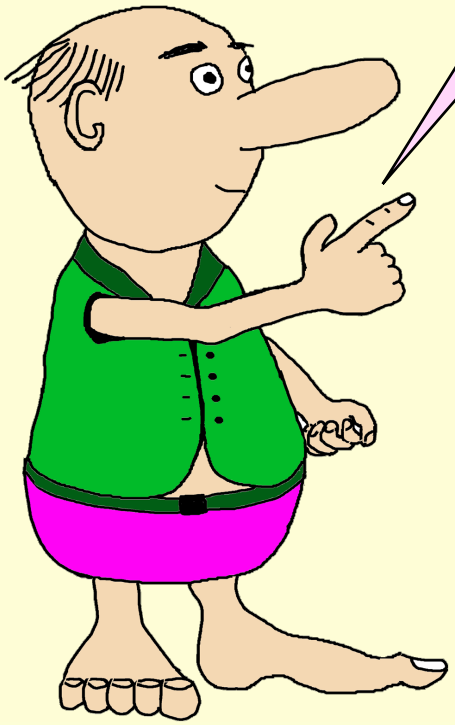
I can remember, as a kid suffering from “Mondayitis”. I was fit and well all weekend, but when Monday morning came around and it was time to go to school, I would develop a sore throat or sick stomach. This got me off school for one day. I didn’t do it consciously, my subconscious mind looked after that for me.

Our mind and our body interact continually. Our physical health depends on keeping this interaction healthy.

Pat had a rash on her arm. The doctors could not find the cause. She came to me asking if there was anything I could do. I approached the problem from two angles. The first was to explore what factors in her life might be contributing to the rash. The second was to do some energy tapping on the problem of the rash. After a couple of sessions, we got a good result and the rash disappeared.

I don’t know to this day which part of the therapy did the trick. Maybe we don’t have to know, just as long as it worked. Both Pat and I believe the energy tapping had a profound effect. I do not claim that the type of work I do is a magical cure for all physical ailments, but I do believe that working with the mind and the body’s energy systems can have a positive outcome.

Chapter 3. Retirement



“The Retirement Trap”
October 2008

My Uncle Claude was a Senior Manager with Ampol Petroleum in the late 1950s in Victoria. He retired at 65 and brought a huge caravan. He and my auntie commenced their journey of a lifetime driving around Australia. As it turned out, it was the last journey of his lifetime. They arrived at the Gold Coast and he dropped dead from a massive heart attack.

What went so wrong? My uncle did not look after his health, so he was a time bomb waiting to go off. He had been looking forward to his retirement and planned for it for a long time. It was going to be so good. No more worries, just relaxation and the easy life. Wrong!

Retirement usually involves large changes and stress. Claude’s retirement was no exception. One of the big changes for Claude was about the loss of status. When he belonged to Ampol, he had prestige and people looked up to him. When his job finished, so did his prestige. He was no longer an important executive.

He did not acknowledge the stress of this change. He buried himself in his preparations for their trip around Australia. He worked hard getting everything organized. He ignored his chest pains. They would go away once he had time to relax, (so he hoped).

As his level of stress increased, so did his chest pains. He continued to ignore them. Had he seen a doctor, he would probably have lived for many more years and enjoyed his well earned retirement.

Most people have the dream that with retirement comes taking it easy and just relaxing - no more responsibilities. That’s the dream. Usually it doesn’t work out that way.

If we prepare ourselves for the stresses of change when we retire, then we stand a better chance of avoiding the “Retirement Trap”. The better our grip on reality, the better our chances of surviving and enjoying the change.

For me, I have reached the age where I could retire if I wanted to. But I don’t want to. I don’t see retirement as a milestone in my life. I will just make a series of adjustments to what I do, based on my reducing capacity as I grow older.

I will attempt to do useful things as long as I am able to. I want to keep my mind and body active. I want to remain useful and productive for as long as I can. This way I’ll avoid the “Retirement Trap”.