

Insomnia? No Such Thing

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You've been going from doctor to doctor in search of an answer. You've tried counting sheep so often that each one has a name and a distinguishing characteristic or even personality. "Oh, there's Fred, he's really nice, and quite a snazzy dresser, just look at that wool coat!" Or, you've drank enough warm milk to be the poster child for the *Got Milk* campaign, but they won't use your picture because your eyes are three quarters shut during the day. No matter what, you just can't get to sleep. Or even worse, after you do fall asleep, you keep waking up over and over.

The problem here has little to nothing to do with sleep itself. It only takes a moment to step outside our force-fed paradigm to see that because of all the overstimulation during the day, the mind cannot relax in the evening and it is the mind's rambling and constant chatter that keeps us awake. If you just said, "What mind chatter? I don't have any mind chatter!" then that's exactly the mind chatter I'm talking about!

Among the many types of overstimulation are caffeine, and high calorie and high sugar foods and drinks. Telephones, car traffic, music and a television or a computer on in every room don't help either. What would a day look like without these familiar friends? Okay, a whole day is stretching it, so how about an hour? Does the thought of not having the TV or computer on sound ridiculous or even lonely to you?

If the mind and body are connected, doesn't it make sense to do whatever it takes to relax the mind during the day?

So, how often do you just do nothing? You heard me--nothing as in *no thing*! Obviously, doing nothing all day won't get anything done, but doing nothing for a few moments will. If we process our stress well during the day, we'd hardly if ever have sleep difficulties. Meditation is of course one of the best methods for relaxing the mind and processing stress, but because it seems to involve doing nothing, we often don't even try. Some of us do try but to no avail and then beat ourselves up for not having done well. Well, the way you define success in meditation is beginning your meditation practice, and it's called a practice or a reason!

If you have a plumbing problem, call a plumber. If you have a construction issue, call a contractor. Likewise, if you have a sleeping problem, listen to someone who falls asleep well and stays asleep. Everyone who engages in beginning a meditation practice not only sleeps better; they (we) are also more alert during the day. We don't need coffee or even the occasional candy bar to wake us up. And we can often get by on much less quantity of sleep if need be. Find a meditation class, learn how to do it correctly, and watch your insomnia drown in your very own milk mustache.