

Hipocrates

Eugene Schoenfeld M.D.

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QUESTION: My old lady is a light sleeper and she can't sleep because my snoring keeps her awake. I've never heard myself snore, but those who have say I'm really loud.

What causes snoring? Is there anything I can do about this problem—other than separate bedrooms?

ANSWER: Mark Twain wrote, "There ain't no way to find out why a snorer can't hear himself snore." His intimate friends (victims) can.

Rarely, the cause of snoring can be traced to an obstruction in the nasal passages. But usually no physical defect is found. Snorers usually sleep with their mouths partially open. If your old lady were really uptight she could make your jaw up-tight with a scarf.

Gently nudging or turning a snorer will cause the din to stop—at least temporarily. Some partners of snorers wear ear plugs to bed. My apprentice suggests wax, rather than rubber ear plugs. They're available at most pharmacies.

She also advises that gently pinching the nose of a snorer will cause him to awaken. (Be Certain you're on good terms.) "Him" is used only in a grammatical sense, of course. Many women snore too.

Are there readers with other suggestions?

QUESTION: My roommates and I were wondering whether you answer nonsexual questions. So here is mine.

I have insomnia for weeks at a time, several times throughout the year (maybe this is a sexual question after all). The rest of the time I sleep well.

I've tried mild sleeping pills, counting sheep, etc., but nothing short of drinking a six pack of beer every night gets me to sleep before 3 AM.

Any suggestions?

ANSWER: Since you have insomnia only at certain times during the year, you might try to examine your activities during these periods. Are you facing pressures from schoolwork or a job? Personal social problems perhaps?



Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld speaking at Community Arts Auditorium, May 28, 1969 at a benefit for Open City.

Photo: Alan Gotkin.

Most people find that exercise followed by a warm bath gives relief from insomnia. Relying on drugs like alcohol or barbiturates for treating insomnia may lead to serious problems.

QUESTION: Because I work full time, am a part-time student and at the same time try to carry on a decent social life, something's got to give timewise.

I find myself whittling away hours from sleep, hoping to "train" myself to manage on 5 or 6 hours of sleep per night. I'd love to continue to burn my candle at both ends but wonder whether this can go on indefinitely.

Although I'm in my mid-thirties I've never attained a particularly stable life pattern. And I don't seem to have the kind of body awareness that a lot of the younger crowd have. Half of the time I don't really know whether I really feel well. I know when I feel very very good or very bad.

P. S. My father carried on an enormously busy and stressful medical practice, slept 4 hours a night and lived to be 71.

ANSWER: Body awareness techniques have been developed for several years at the Esalen Institute. Some of these methods are described in Bernard Gunther's *Sensory Awareness* and William Schutz's *Joy*.

Sensitivity to one's body and feelings may be achieved in many ways. You could change your surroundings at periodic intervals, for example. The original trip is a trip. A vacation alters the things your eyes see, the sounds heard, the smell, the feel of air against your body.

The average person sleeps 7 to 8 hours a night. Some people seem to do well with a little less sleep. Older individuals commonly sleep less than younger people.

But candles burned at both ends don't last very long.

QUESTION: Whenever my boyfriend and I have intercourse, during each stroke his balls slap against my body.

In addition to this being painful to him, the slapping sound is so amusing that we have to momentarily stop because we start laughing.

We have thought of taping his balls to his torso. Is there any other solution to our problem?

— Slap Happy

ANSWER: There is certainly a place for humor in sex but if breaking up threatens to break you up I'm sure you'll find a way to handle the problem.

Dear Dr. HipPocrates is a collection of letters and answers published by Grove Press. \$5 at your favorite bookstore.

Dr. Schoenfeld welcomes your letters. Write to him c/o P.O. Box 9002, Berkeley, California, 94709.

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