



Faith Squared Music

Christ-Centered Healing Through Neuroplasticity

32 STRATEGIES FOR BETTER SLEEP

(Excerpted from *I Have Faith in God, and He Has Faith in Me*)

If you're exploring this website because you have a problem with anxiety, trauma, or chronic illness, it is a good bet that getting sufficient sleep is maybe not your superpower right now. Oh... how I feel your pain. And oh, how I want to help!

Greatly improved sleep is one of the very best benefits I've enjoyed as a direct result of my brain-rewiring efforts. Dialing down the fear and agitation in the brain is a powerful thing because it gets to the heart of the issue. As someone who has spent way too much time in the ER due to extended and extreme sleep deprivation, I hope you can see that I know from whence I speak! But brain rewiring is not an overnight fix, and you will likely need some additional help as you move along your path.

Many of my suggestions for getting a good night's sleep may be familiar to you. They are common pointers shared by sleep experts and medical professionals. You're welcome for the reminders. Some of them might be quite new to you though. You're welcome for that as well. Please know that it probably won't be just one thing that makes the difference for you, but a combination of things. I wish you all the best.

1—Get plenty of natural sunlight in the day and keep the lights low in the evening. Your primitive brain is wired to measure the light cycles in nature as indications of when you're supposed to be slowing down and preparing for sleep vs. when you are supposed to be waking up and preparing to go pick berries or slay your four-legged protein serving for the day. If you keep your living areas filled with bright light throughout the evening, your brain gets the wrong message. The serotonin and melatonin inside of you keep running into detour signs and bumping into each other trying to figure out whose turn it is. Help them out.

2—Avoid (or darken) your computer, tablet, and phone screens in the evening. Your brain perceives the light from these devices as very similar to daytime lights, so again... you're confusing the serotonin and melatonin cycles. If you must be on these devices before bed (now be honest with yourself about that), buy some of the blue light blocking glasses and use them. (This is another time to apply the principle of "You get what you pay for." Cheap ones may not do the job right.)

3—Eliminate extra sources of light in your sleeping area. If the neighbors have a porch light that shines in your window, and they refuse to turn it off despite your chocolate chip cookie bribery attempts, do what you can to block the window. Turn off your night lights if you can safely do so and still find your way to the privy in the dark. And look out for those little indicator lights from assorted electronics you might have in your room. All of those things can interfere with your sleep if you are significantly sleep-challenged.

4—Get some good exercise during the day but avoid it in the hours before bed. Exercising in the evening, when you plan to bed down soon thereafter, just doesn't work well for most people. The general recommendation is to avoid getting your heart rate up for three hours or so before lights out.

5—Consider the possibility that you might have a sleep disorder. Not so long ago, in my mind, anyone with a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea, was male, older than me, greatly overweight and they snored. None of that was me, so I couldn't possibly have a sleep disorder. I was wrong. Many people of many ages and sizes have sleep disorders. A few years ago, someone suggested to me that this issue might be part of my insomnia struggles, so I saw a sleep doctor and had a sleep study. I was diagnosed with something called UARS (upper airway resistance syndrome). I have an APAP machine (similar to a CPAP machine), and though it took a bit of adjustment, it has made a big difference in my sleep quality. It took a fair amount of pride-swallowing, but it was worth it.

Learn from me, if you need to, on this. (UPDATE: After some weight loss, brain rewiring, and improved health treatments & practices, I don't need to use my machine anymore.)

6—Aid sinus drainage and digestion issues by elevating the head of the bed. For a while I elevated my head by sleeping with a bed wedge, but at one point that became impossible after a minor back injury meant I needed to be flat on the mattress. So, we put blocks of wood under the legs at the head of the bed as a temporary solution, and it is working so well we've kept it that way.

7—Consider blocking any unavoidable noise with earplugs or white noise. I've been wearing ear plugs for years, and it has saved me from countless potential sleep disruptions from airplanes, neighbors' dogs, my snoring or showering husband, you name it. If you need it to be really quiet at night, this is a perfect solution. I use the little disposable foam ones and order them in bulk. (UPDATE: After developing an allergy to foam earplugs, I switched to natural beeswax plugs, and they are wonderful.) White noise machines work for some... but be mindful of the potential problems with one more electronic device close to your head at night. You could be making things worse. Keep it across the room.

8—Choose only soothing music to listen to as bedtime approaches. There are some wonderful collections of instrumental music out there created just for this purpose. I discovered the music of [Tim Janis on YouTube](#) and came to rely on it when I was struggling. (Music with a strong beat can be a powerful stimulant, and it can take a while for that to wear off, so choose carefully.)

9—Mind what you watch on television before bed. Something calculated to frighten, anger, or stimulate is probably going to change your heart rate and maybe even affect things in your body like blood pressure, adrenalin and cortisol production, etc. Not only that, but just the mental stimulation of particular plots or action sequences can be a dripping faucet of the night to your brain.

10—Be mindful of foods and liquids that might get in the way of your sleep. Understanding the stimulating effects of common items in your diet and learning which foods are more challenging for our bodies to digest is crucial. Some of these many items might include: beef, acidic foods such as tomato sauce or paste, anything with high carbs or high sugar content (even natural sugars, like fruit juices), caffeine (which includes chocolate), processed meats (or anything especially fatty or full of chemicals), alcohol, anything spicy, soda pop, fermented foods, and even some vegetables such as broccoli. Dairy, especially milk and ice cream, will often produce mucous and interfere with your sinuses and clear breathing. And of course, a heavy meal of any kind just before bed will likely get in the way of your sleep as well. Digestion takes energy to accomplish. If your body has to work hard to digest two servings of pasta and several selections from the dessert bar that were just consumed an hour ago, the sandman won't be able to get in the door! (NOTE: Once you are well down the healing path of brain rewiring, you'll find that you'll be able to eat what you want most of the time without it interfering with sleep at all.)

11—Taper or eliminate your water consumption after your evening meal. Hydrate like crazy during the day but ease up before bed so that a full bladder doesn't wake you up more than it has to.

12—Find out if any supplements or medications that you take can interfere with sleep. If so, and they are things that you really do need to take, see if you can take them in the morning instead of the evening, or with the dosages spread out in a way that your body will better tolerate.

13—Make sure there are no avoidable allergens in your sleeping environment. These might include pet dander (another tough one!), dust, carpeting or carpet pads, and certain kinds of fabrics or fabric treatments, or detergents to which you may be reacting. Some people have found that switching to mattresses and pillows made from certain natural fibers can make a difference, too. You might also consider a wood-framed bed instead of a metal-framed one, and a mattress without metal springs. (UPDATE: We switched to a good quality self-inflating air mattress with a memory foam pad on top. It is heaven, SO much less expensive than regular mattresses, and my back is perfectly happy!)

14—Work on letting go of your worries and to-do lists. One way to do this might be to keep paper and pencil nearby so that you can write the things down that you don't want to forget, if that pressure sometimes keeps you awake. Inspiration often comes in the wee hours, too... so, just getting up and recording it on paper before it slips away can greatly ease your mind.

15—Make use of sleep-inducing meditation recordings. For over a year, I came to rely on several of these to help me relax and ease into sleep. I bought CDs, downloaded some good audio files, and even recorded some meditations myself, always starting with controlled deep breathing exercises. Coupled with the right soothing background music, they often worked better than any sleeping pill ever could. Just don't have a computer screen near you while you're trying to slip off... and work it out so that you

don't have to get out of bed to turn off a device when it is done! (Even with digital music so easy to access, I still keep a CD player by my bed with music and meditations available as needed. I can just push a button and not have to stimulate my brain by looking at a screen or scrolling through a menu.)

16—Change where you sleep if there is a chance the current location is affected by a geopathic interference zone. Our earth has a magnetic field, and it is affected by many things such as rock fractures and faults (large and small), water veins, and geomagnetic grids. Some people and animals are very sensitive to these changes and variations, and that sensitivity can interfere with sleep. My doctor suspected that a fault line under my bed (along with pipes in the wall and some other issues) may have been part of my sleep problems, but there really was no other place to put our bed. So, I tried sleeping “upside down” ...with my feet at the head of the bed and vice versa. It was almost miraculous what an instant improvement I experienced. Just like Shrek and Davy Jones, now I'm a believer. (A Faraday cage EMF shielding canopy was eventually put into use, and the previous measures were no longer necessary. More on that later...)

17—Avoid antiperspirants. They clog your pores and get in the way of your body cleansing itself of toxins, which happens largely through your armpits. If those toxins can't exit as nature meant them to, where will they go? Your body must work overtime to try to figure out a plan B. And if you're asking it to put in overtime, that requires energy. Besides, you should have ditched antiperspirants anyway... too many dangerous ingredients and studies linking them to cancer, especially breast cancer. Use a natural deodorant. I make my own with coconut oil, arrowroot powder, and baking soda. It works just fine.)

18—Don't underestimate the value of helpful bedtime rituals and keeping a consistent bedtime. Your body will thank you for the soothing, comforting reminder that you care enough about yourself to make this a priority. I personally recommend making prayer part of this ritual. Consider asking God to help you sleep well, and help you figure out if there is something else you can do to help yourself sleep better. Maybe you can also ask for support and strength doing what you need to do for the times when sufficient sleep doesn't come. And maybe you can even ask God to carry your worries for you until morning. (At one time, I actually kept a picture of Jesus near my bed, and I taped a paper label over His outstretched hands that said, “My burdens.” Visualizing Him actually taking them and holding them for me was a great comfort.)

19—Don't nap if you can help it. Some people can do this whenever and however and still sleep at night. Most folks fighting insomnia and anxiety cannot. If you're fighting the nap thing, go find something to do that will keep you awake!

20—Try to keep your room free of things that demand your attention. Visual reminders of tasks that are weighing on your conscience or sense of duty need to sleep elsewhere. A home office in the bedroom can be a real troublemaker.

21—Pay attention to your sleep issues and look for patterns. Call it a sleep diary if you like, but you just might find the answers this way. The problem could be as simple as a weekly conversation with a person who amps up your worry levels, or a Friday night pizza habit.

22—Mouth tape! This is something I learned about only recently from my new holistic dentist, and it has been a game-changer. I used to use a chin sling to keep my mouth shut as I slept. (Mouth falling open = snoring = waking up) No more! (Besides, I found that over the years it had contributed to my teeth becoming more misaligned!) Also known as lip tape, it gently holds your lips together while you sleep. I've never had a bad reaction to the adhesive. I am amazed that no one ever recommended it to me before. Talk about a best kept secret!

23—Set the temperate to something comfortable for you. For most folks this is around 65 to 70 degrees.

24—Find a way to replace old worn out or uncomfortable pillows or mattresses. I love my contoured memory foam pillow so much I won't travel without it, though it takes up half my suitcase. Your neck and back will take care of you much better if you take care of them. (Which opens the door for a whole section on the benefits and miracles of regular chiropractic care, which I wholeheartedly endorse, but we'll leave that for another time.)

25—Try ending the day with a warm bath or shower. It is warm and soothing, and makes you slow down. Use oils or salts in the tub if that helps you. Turn the lights down, do some deep breathing, put on some Tim Janis. Most people sleep much better when they feel clean anyway, so that is a bonus.

26—Read a good book before bedtime. Just take care that it doesn't have action and plot twists that might be too stimulating. If

you have someone in your life who can read to you... that can be a real blessing. Audio books are a good option, too. Just make sure you know when to stop! (Remember that reading a book on the blue screen of an electronic device before bed is NOT helping.)

27—Turn off or mute your phone! Period. If you are worried about needing it in an emergency, consider going back to a land line, if only at night. Buy a regular alarm clock if you must. Even if you turn off all the notifications on your cell phone, the temptation to get on social media or check emails or texts is too great for most of us. And then the blue light from the screen is messing with your sleep cycle again.

27—Just use your bed as a bed. If you treat it like a lounging area or snacking space or movie theater, you brain and body don't relate the location with the act of sleeping, and that will not help you get in the right frame of mind for slumber.

28—Try a sleep-inducing visualization for your body. Start at your head and slowly work down (although some like to start at the feet and work up), focusing on each part of your body and sending it some love. Really. Your acceptance of your body is an important part of this process. You can clench and tighten individual muscles, and then relax them as you work through your head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, torso, etc. ...or just concentrate on really relaxing each isolated part of your anatomy and skip the clenching. Either way, express gratitude to each and every part of your body for all the ways they bless you and support you, then give them permission to let go, and take a well-earned rest. Intersperse deep breathing throughout. If you have a partner who can gently and soothingly massage each area as you progress through this exercise, that may contribute to the success of the process.

29—Use The Law of Attraction. Find a repetitive phrase or affirmation having to do with your confidence in your ability to fall asleep and sleep well. Pick something simple that you can repeat to yourself in your head without thinking too hard and use it as a sleep mantra. The affirmation poems provided on this site are perfect for this purpose. I put them the recordings on a CD that I have often used to lull myself to sleep. (Please remember that saying things like, "I'm never going to get to sleep!" will convince your brain of just that and reinforce the problem.)

30—Know when it is time to admit defeat. If you know you'll be awake for hours no matter what, once in a while it is okay to just get up, go to another room, find a soothing distraction or two, and try again later.

31—Turn off the WIFI! This should always happen at night, and if you can possibly eliminate it all together, you'll be much better off. Wired connections via ethernet cables are more reliable, AND they prevent you and your loved ones from being bathed in dangerous EMF (electromagnetic fields) all day, which is proven to cause anxiety and insomnia. Pay attention to what your bed might be close to, such as a modem or computer, refrigerator on the other side of the wall, smart meters outside your house, etc. Do not use electric blankets or electric beds, etc. Learn more about it here...

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/strong-lives/202205/unsuspecting-link-sleep-deprivation-and-stress>

<https://ehtrust.org/cell-phone-radiation-biological-and-health-effects-dr-devra-davis-explains/>

My past experience with electromagnetic hypersensitivity syndrome convinced me to buy an EMF shielding canopy, and it really did make a difference... especially since I lived in an area with HUNDREDS of tower and antennas within a 3-mile radius of my home. (You can find this information about your address on www.antennasearch.com) Even though I understand that spending too much time and emotion in avoidance behaviors can increase the fear of any specific perceived threat, unrelenting exposure to too much EMF is a REAL danger to all of us... and that includes the pollinating insects, which means our global food supply is threatened. Just like you don't want to breathe in 2nd hand smoke all day, have an x-ray every week, or consume tuna fish for dinner every night, finding ways to protect yourself from EMF will absolutely increase your chances of improved sleep.

32 - Take something safe and natural that can calm and relax you and help induce sleep. I've tried many items on the list below, some with great results and some with not-so-great results. (That was generally due to my past tendency to overreact to a boatload of things before I discovered brain rewiring!) And please understand... I'm NOT a health care professional and can't really tell you what you should or shouldn't take. Everyone is different in how they respond to things. So, if you want to know more about anything on this list, DO YOUR RESEARCH, and proceed with wisdom and discretion. (NOTE: I have had doctors and health coaches/consultants who do muscle testing with patients/clients to assure they will respond well to assorted supplements... it is something I really recommend.)

None of these things require a doctor's prescription, recommendation, or supervision, but I still recommend that supervision. Na-

turopaths and holistic doctors are your best bet here. And always... before you take anything new, read the instructions. Make sure it won't interact badly with other things you are already taking or might take in the future, and make sure it doesn't contain any ingredients that you are allergic to. You might even consider starting with a dosage smaller than what is recommended and then work your way up from there. And if you like, just to be on the safe side, take your first dose when someone can be there with you in person or on the phone, just like I recommend with new prescriptions.

Here we go with my own simple list of safe and natural calming substances...

CBD oil	Glycine
Valerian root	Lavender/Lavandin
Chamomile	Peppermint
Licorice root	Valerian
Passionflower	L-Theanine
Narrow-leaf coneflower	Kava
Lemon balm	B vitamins
Melatonin	Ginkgo biloba
Magnesium/Magnesium citrate	
GABA (Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid)	

Understand that if you ask a typical MD about many of these, they will probably try to discourage you. Most doctors steer clear of them, because, for one thing... they've learned little to nothing about them in medical school and may have only heard the horror stories of when things went wrong. (This is interesting, especially in light of the fact that prescription drugs are the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and Europe. So, there's that.) Additionally, unlike with the manufacture and sale of prescriptions, standardizations of things like potencies and purity are not monitored in the same ways. That can be a slight obstacle, but easy to overcome if you do your homework, and/or have a trusted professional who can guide you toward the purest and most reliable brands.

While we are on the subject of safe and natural things you can take orally, I'm going to plug one particular product. (Again, I'm NOT a health professional!) It is Nature's Sunshine Suma Combination capsules. At a time when I was still reacting to a ton of things, I did NOT react badly to this, and it has helped me SO much. The promotional text says it supports the immune system, and I'm sure it does. But the reason it was recommended and the reason I take it is that it reduced my anxiety and depression. Stated simply, I felt happier. It was IMMEDIATELY noticeable, but not in a drug-induced fashion at all. I LOVE IT. You can take up to two capsules three times a day, but I just do one at breakfast and one with dinner. No side effects for me. It's golden. You can get it from Nature's Sunshine and their distributors, and I also see it is now available on Amazon. It may not be a sleep aid exactly, but if you are functioning from a more relaxed place during the day, it is naturally going to be easier to relax and sleep at night.

I've love reports from folks on what works for them. Success stories make my world go around!

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