Case Study – Frequent Night Awakenings

# Age and Gender

Female, 41 years old

# Summary of Identified Issues

* • Sleep disorder with repeated night awakenings (4 to 6 times per night), difficulty falling back asleep
* • Latent nocturnal hypervigilance, often triggered by tiny noises or intrusive thoughts
* • Anxious anticipation of awakening, creating a vicious cycle of sleep-related anxiety
* • High mental load, ruminating about the next day’s tasks during the night
* • Chronic daytime fatigue, irritability, lack of concentration, and guilt
* • Background of a family environment where “rest was not valued,” with an ingrained belief: “I must always be in control or things will fall apart”

# Dominant Emotions

* • Anticipatory anxiety
* • Frustration and helplessness
* • Guilt about not being “productive” during the day
* • Feeling of losing control

# Limiting Beliefs Detected

* • If I sleep deeply, I might miss something important.
* • I always need to be ready to respond, even at night.
* • I’m weak if I rest too much.

# Triggers and Psychological Mechanisms

Breakdown of the nocturnal reaction:

* • Phase 1 – Light sleep onset (body relaxed but mind on alert)
* • Phase 2 – Sudden awakening (often after 90–120 minutes)
* • Phase 3 – Automatic mental scanning: “Was there a noise? Did I forget something?”
* • Phase 4 – Cognitive activation: intrusive thoughts, projections about the next day
* • Phase 5 – Struggling against wakefulness: “I \*must\* fall back asleep or I’ll be useless tomorrow” → Reinforces insomnia

Link to the past:

• In childhood, the patient had to stay “on alert” (unstable parent or anxious environment)

• She associated vigilance with safety—even at night

# Immersive Scenario and Emotional Anchoring

It’s 3:12 AM. She opens her eyes for no apparent reason. Her heart beats faster. There’s no specific noise, but her brain is already active. A to-do list forces its way in. The fear of not falling back asleep starts creeping in. She turns over, tries to breathe. But the more she tries, the more the agitation rises. In her head, a small voice keeps repeating: “You must sleep… you must sleep…” – and yet, sleep slips away, like a train pulling out of the station while she stands there powerless, watching from the platform.

# Proposed Solutions

## Immediate Solutions

* • “4-7-8” breathing exercise upon awakening to soothe the nervous system
* • Nighttime grounding card: comforting thought or mantra (“I am safe. Everything can wait until tomorrow.”)
* • Get out of bed after 20 minutes of active wakefulness (avoid conditioning the bed as a place of struggle)

## Intermediate Solutions

* • Sleep reconditioning through sensory anchoring (scent, texture, sound)
* • Night awakening journal with kind, pressure-free self-observation
* • Belief retraining via cognitive restructuring: “Deep sleep is my best protection.”

## Long-Term Solutions

* • Regular hypnosis to deactivate internal alert systems
* • Work on inner safety: reinforce the idea that night is a space for release
* • Evening closure rituals (e.g., visualizing a locked chest, symbolic cutoff from the day)

# Recommended Personalized Hypnosis Session

Title: “Let the Night Watch Over Me”

Objective: Deactivate the pattern of nocturnal hypervigilance, instill a deep sense of safety, and create an inner guardian who takes over at night

Duration: 18–20 minutes – Format: Slow, reassuring voice – Ambiance: Soft rain or crackling fire

Structure:

* • Progressive induction centered on releasing automatic thoughts
* • Metaphor of a benevolent watcher: an inner presence stands guard so the mind can rest
* • Final anchor: each breath becomes a key that closes a mental door until morning

# Evolutionary Follow-Up and Progress Indicators

* • Week 1: Track frequency and intensity of awakenings (scale from 0 to 5)
* • Week 2: Integrate sensory anchor + evaluate nighttime anxiety level
* • Week 3: Signs of stabilization in sleep phases, beginning of rest revaluation
* • Week 4: Reduced awakenings (1–2 max), noticeable evening calmness

# Final Motivational Phrase

And what if tonight, for the first time in a long while, you allowed the night to take care of you… As if your body already knew how to rest… and your mind could finally lay down its arms.