Wellness 198: Scholarly Integration Papers I

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My very first goal is to have a good mood most of the time. I chose this goal because a good mood will benefit a person in terms of health as well as efficiency. For example, if I have a good mood, I will do my work more quickly and go to office hours more readily. This will improve my efficiency in work. Furthermore, having a good mood usually correlates positively with health since it will allow me to sleep better and exercise with greater diligence. Also a good mood will influence those around me and make them happier. This not only makes positive impact on the surroundings, but also improves the efficiency of group work. So I feel this goal is important in one’s life.

In the past, I tried to work on the goal by reminding myself to be happy and also spending time watching comics and TV series. However, I didn’t succeed in fulfilling these goals because I only reminded myself to be happy and should not care too much. Yet when there is more homework, more deadlines and more projects, my mood gets worse. Also, watching comics and TV series could only improve my mood temporarily. And when bad grades, exam stress and interpersonal problems surface, my mood deteriorates. Furthermore, relaxing for too long usually makes things worse since it takes up too much time.

Now I have two behaviors available for this goal.

The very first behavior is a theory learnt from the book *The Insomnia Workbook*, to practice deep belly breathing. The book *Stress Free For Good* also mentions that this belly breathing exercise is scientifically beneficial. My plan is to do deep breathing 2 times a day, thinking about the things that I have done during the day and the kindness that people have done to me. This creates a virtuous cycle for me. Firstly, I feel during the several minutes of deep breathing, I am very much focused yet relaxed. I am focused because I don’t have anything else to think about and I just focus my mind on the happiness during the day. I am relaxed because deep breathing is a great tool to help me relax. Furthermore, I feel this makes me more ready to do work perhaps because I am a little less stressed after the exercise. And since I finish my work earlier, I feel even less stressed.

The second behavior is that I plan to make a planner for the things that I must do today. The root cause of my bad mood is usually approaching deadlines for projects and assignments, forcing me to stay late. And a lack of sleep triggers an even worse mood. Thus I should solve the root cause of bad mood finishing the work earlier and getting a more regular sleep.

The positive vision is that now I would be able to finish work earlier. Also I would be able to relax and sleep regularly. This will boost my efficiency and create a virtuous cycle in boosting my mood.

Another goal that I have would be to sleep earlier. I chose this goal because sleep is a very important contributing factor to health. Also, a good night’s sleep boosts productivity and mood. I usually feel really good after I had a good night’s sleep so I think sleeping earlier would help to boost my productivity.

I used to force myself to sleep early. However, I find this makes the situation even worse. Trying to sleep early makes the insomnia even more severe, because one tends to think about the bad consequences of not falling asleep and the vicious cycle ensues.

Here are the 2 new behaviors that I would like to attempt to solve the problem.

1. Get up early at 8:30 every day. As we mentioned in class, we should try to fix a time to get up rather than to fix a time to sleep. Thus setting a time to get up early will force one to sleep early in order to repay the debt. As we know that sleep debt is only paid with more sleep. Hence if one sleeps late yet gets up early, he will need to sleep earlier the next day in order to repay the sleep debt. Hence getting up early will help to fix a schedule for sleeping as well.
2. Read a book before sleep. This is actually on the relaxation list of the book *The Insomnia workbook*. I feel this would be a great strategy for me because reading interesting books has always its appeal to me. Some novels by certain writers are easy to read and help people to relax. And I have always been an avid book reader. Hence reading a book before sleep will help me to forget the stress during the day.

My positive vision is that I will be less stressful and calm myself down right before sleep. This will make it easier for me to sleep. And by getting up on time, this will force me to sleep earlier. So hopefully in this way, I would be able to form a regular sleeping schedule.