

Reminder: this class is
being recorded

Time and Project Management

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DS4S



Dedicated to
Esther Belle Zahniser
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Time and Project Management

- Personal time management
 - Sleep
 - Scheduling
- Project Planning as an Individual
- Project Planning in a Group

2017-2018 Faculty
Leadership Academy



"The Faculty Leadership Academy is a workshop series for faculty with tenure or security of employment who have demonstrated the potential for leadership and who may aspire to join the ranks of academic leaders*."

*chairs, deans, provosts, chancellor, and such

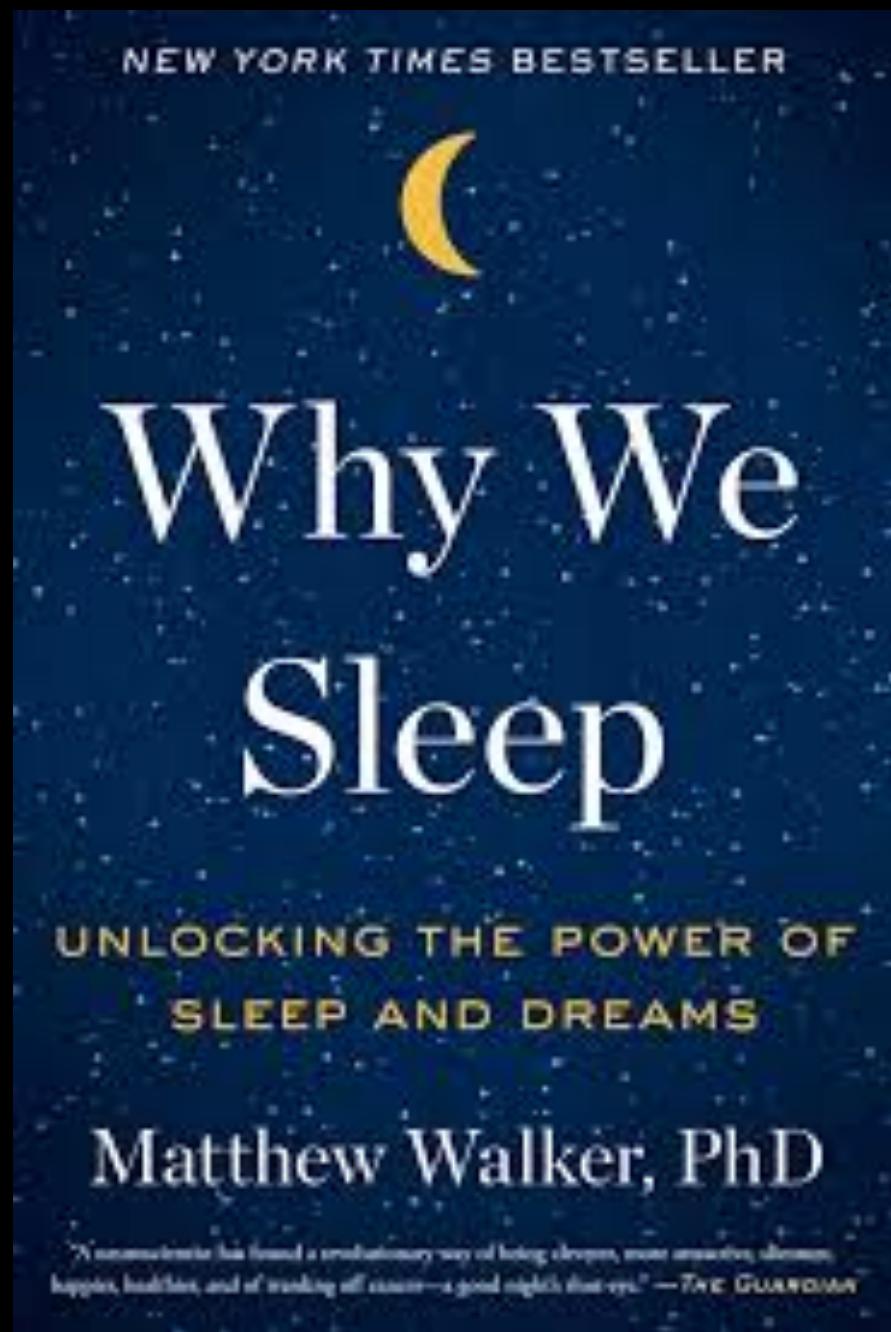
Sleep

Please put in the chat how many hours of sleep you got last night, if you're willing.

Or, how many you get on an average night.

Also Click “yes” if you usually wake up via an alarm (as opposed to just waking up on your own).

Sleep



“Two-thirds of adults throughout all developed nations fail to obtain the recommended eight hours of nightly sleep.*”

sleep is

the chief nourisher in life's feast

—W. Shakespeare

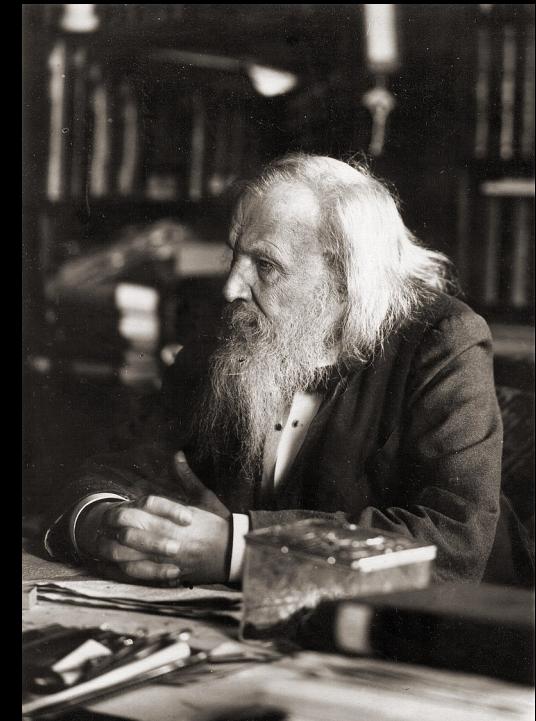
Learning

- Clears out short-term limited-capacity buffer (hippocampus) for re-use.
- Consolidates for long-term recall (in cortex)
- In experiments: the more deep NREM sleep, the more facts retained.
- There is evidence that this transfer activity is especially rich in the late-morning hours in between periods of REM sleep (in NREM sleep).
- More than memory transfer occurs: lessons can be synthesized and converted to mastery. There is a rich processing of information.

the chief nourisher in life's feast

Creativity

I saw in a dream a table where all the elements fell into place as required. Awakening, I immediately wrote it down on a piece of paper. Only in one place did a correction later seem necessary. — Dimitri Mendeleev



Cons of sleep deprivation

- Loss of ability to direct focus
 - 400% degradation from one night of no sleep
 - Similar degradation matched by enduring 10 days of six hour nights.
 - Three nights of recovery sleep inadequate to restore to baseline performance.
 - Participants consistently underestimated their degree of impairment.
 - People will acclimate to their low performance level due to low sleep. “That low-sleep exhaustion becomes their accepted norm.”

Cons of sleep deprivation

- Emotional irrationality and reactivity; loss of equanimity
- Weakened immune system
- Weakened reproductive system
- Increased risk of cancer
- Increased risk of obesity
- Increased risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduction in physical attractiveness
- A shortened life

How can I get better sleep?

You can take steps to improve your sleep habits. First, make sure that you allow yourself enough time to sleep (**at least an eight hour “sleep opportunity.”**)... To improve your sleep habits, it also may help to

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- Avoid caffeine, especially in the afternoon and evening
- Avoid nicotine
- Exercise regularly, but don't exercise too late in the day **Raises core body temp, inhibiting sleep**
- Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed **Alcohol is an efficient destroyer of REM sleep**
- Avoid large meals and beverages late at night
- Don't take a nap after 3 p.m.
- Relax before bed, for example by taking a bath, reading or listening to relaxing music
- Keep the temperature in your bedroom cool (**core body temp again — can be hard in Davis in summer**)
- Get rid of distractions such as noises, bright lights, and a TV or computer in the bedroom. Also, don't be tempted to go on your phone or tablet just before bed.
- Get enough sunlight exposure during the day (**note during pandemic!**)
- Don't lie in bed awake; if you can't sleep for 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing
- See a doctor if you have continued trouble sleeping. You may have a sleep disorder, such as insomnia or sleep apnea.

tl;dr version of recommendations:

- 1) give yourself at least an 8-hour sleep opportunity every night and**

- 2) have this opportunity at the same time every day.**

And why spend time asleep, seemingly doing nothing? To summarize:

Scientists have discovered a revolutionary new treatment that makes you live longer. It enhances your memory and makes you more creative. It makes you look more attractive. It keeps you slim and lowers food cravings. It wards off colds and the flu. It lowers your risk of heart attacks and stroke, not to mention diabetes. You'll even feel happier, less depressed, and less anxious. Are you interested?

—Matthew Walker

So how do I make time
for all this *% sleep!

One obvious answer:

- Sleep will make you more productive per unit hour of effort (we just covered this!)

Time sinks: let's make a list

- binge watching television
- video games
- social media
- media (distressing news)
- teaching 7 series :-)
- grinding gears in a low-productivity state
- additional tasks beyond your day job
- activities that downgrade sleep quality

Strategies to avoid time sinks: let's make another list

- on phone can set time-screen limits, and for certain apps (e.g. Instagram)
- Write down how long am going to spend on something
- make a plan with another person and benefit from social support for productive activity
- virtual office Zoom call
- take a break from social media — don't open the apps for a week

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Organizing your time: the FLA-recommended approach

- Quarterly: set goals for the quarter
- Weekly: plan out the week before it starts (e.g., Sunday evening, or Friday afternoon)
- Daily: plan out the day before it starts (e.g. the end of the previous work day)
- Planning Process:
 - Write down all items to possibly get done (or engage with)
 - Establish a priority ranking via binary comparison (apparently the kind of comparison our brains do best)
 - Eliminate the lower priority items based on assessment of what is possible to get done

Organizing your time: the practices I've adopted

- Quarterly: set goals for the quarter (I never manage to do this in any formal way, though I probably should)
- Weekly: plan out the week before it starts (e.g., Sunday evening, or Friday afternoon) — I sometimes manage to do this, usually turning to it if I am feeling in danger of being overwhelmed by anxiety about how I can meet my commitments.
- Daily: plan out the day before it starts (e.g. the end of the previous work day) — my commitment here is variable as well, but I do find it helpful when I do it.
- My planning process for generating a day's or a weeks schedule will follow a brief comment on planning...

On planning out a schedule

If you want to make God laugh, tell [God] about your plans.

—Woody Allen

In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Creating a plan for the day: my process

- make additions to the running to-do list (kept on a scrap of paper in pocket)
- pull from those items tasks you would like to happen on the day in question and, on another piece of paper, group them into big and small, or big, medium, and small. Examples:
 - big: work on proposal or work on a paper
 - medium: prepare for tomorrow's class, exercise, meet with X to discuss Y
 - small: respond to so-and-so's email, pay credit card bill
- Schedule what happens when. Do small-item scheduling in bulk; i.e., on my calendar it might say from 12-1 pm "small items."
- Aim for realism rather than aspiration. If it doesn't all fit, think about what can be put off, and what can be de-scoped, delegated, or dropped.
- Transfer running to-do list to new scrap of paper when current one gets filled up with completed and yet-to-complete items.

Execution of daily plan

- The plan is in my Google calendar so it is easily accessed and I get notifications.
- I also carry the to-do list on a piece of paper in my pocket.
- I adapt as I go, altering the plan on the fly When scheduling reveals it can't all happen, then I prioritize and down-select.
 - What can be kicked to next week, delegated, dropped, or de-scoped?
- In the evening, I make a new plan for the next day.

What are some benefits of having a daily plan?

- Easier to avoid time sinks.
- Allows for intentional, rather than accidental, prioritization.
- Reduces anxiety about whether it can all get done.
- You can protect non-work parts of your life!
 - I schedule blocks of time as “No work.” (Time off is a good on its own, and can be restorative).
 - I schedule meditation and exercise.
- Gives you a basis for uttering that all-important two-letter word, “No.” (Or, to your advisor, “what things do you want me to drop so I have time for this new direction you are suggesting?”)

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Project Planning as an Individual

- Before the project gets started, what is the number one question to ask?

Project Planning as an Individual

- Deciding what project to execute
- Making a plan
- Executing and adapting

Deciding on a Project

- Questions to ask:
 - Am I curious about the result?
 - Do I feel enthusiastic about getting to work on it?
 - How do I expect it to forward my goals?
 - What will I learn from it?
 - Is it playing to a particular strength of me (or my advisor / collaborators)?
 - What is the expected impact on my scientific community?
 - What are the alternatives? (Spend time on this proportionate to time you expect the project will take: for a 6-month project, maybe spend a week)
- Who to discuss all this with: yourself, your advisor, peers, collaborators, members of your thesis committee, ...

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 - What is the expected impact on my scientific field?
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"LIFE HAS QUESTIONS. THEY HAVE ANSWERS."
—THE NEW YORK TIMES



BILL BURNETT & DAVE EVANS

DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

HOW TO BUILD A WELL-LIVED,
JOYFUL LIFE

Project Planning as an Individual

- Deciding what project to execute
- Making a plan
 - Have a general high-level plan written down in a file. Include expected dates of completion. This doesn't necessarily have to be a lot of detail. Get your advisor's feedback/input.
- Executing and adapting
 - Revisit and adjust your plan over time.
 - You are free to: refine the schedule, make a major change (pivot), or even abandon the project

Project Abandonment

- Beware of the sunk-cost fallacy
- Two stories of project abandonment
 - beginning of my first postdoc
 - talk at Stanford c. 2011
- But be careful about getting excited about the next shiny thing and not seeing a perfectly good project all the way through to completion (publication).

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Project Planning in a Group

- Rich subject — we only have time here for some logistics focused on getting you going on your project.
- Start off by taking turns saying something briefly about each other — perhaps the subfield of your thesis work.
- Select a group chair
 - chair has special responsibility for providing coordination of activities
 - chair does NOT have authority to tell people what to do
 - chair will propose an agenda for a meeting, and perhaps solicit modifications to agenda to make sure everyone is on the same page about the point of the meeting
- Work towards ensuring that the group understands the task before them. Sketch it out. Identify questions. Work toward ensuring engagement of the whole team — solicit input from your teammates.
- Break down the project into discrete tasks
- Assign dates for completion to tasks. For longer tasks define milestones toward completion and give them complete-by dates as well.
- If you have a hard deadline, work backwards from there and down-scope until your project can make the deadline.
- Assign names to tasks.
- Every member should do what they can to make the environment feel inclusive and welcoming of questions, ideas, and suggestions. People will hold back if they don't feel comfortable, to the detriment of the group.
- Recognize that things might not unfold according to plan — maintain good communication when a deadline is missed. Be responsible for letting your teammates know if it has been missed, or you see risk that you will miss your internal deadline. Work together to figure out how the group gets back on track.

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Break out into groups and start developing your project plan

Highlights

- Time management is an important skill that can be improved with instruction and practice. Pay attention to what works for you.
- Prioritize sleep for greater productivity/hour, enhanced creativity, more effective learning, better relations with collaborators, and much more
 - give yourself at least an 8-hour sleep opportunity every night and
 - have this opportunity at the same time every day.
- One way to know if you could use more sleep: you need an alarm to wake up.
- Planning is valuable, even though plans should be viewed as adaptable. Revisit your plans and see if they need updating.
- Generate many ideas and choose few for execution. Projects can be abandoned.
- **I encourage you to practice scheduling over the next month with the methodology I presented today or some variant.**
- Deciding what project to work on for the next six months to several years is a choice that should be made with some creative deliberation.