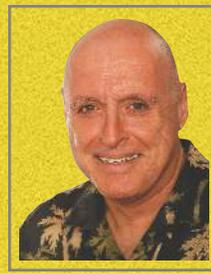


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1126 Sleep Debt Cannot be Repaid

When most people borrow, they pay back and all is well. That's the way it's intended to be. What if I told you that the majority of people, including you and me, are borrowing all the time and we're negligent about the payback? What if I told you that even if we paid it back in full, it wouldn't satisfy the debt? I'm Jerry Roberts, and I'll tell you what I'm getting at, next, on The Extra Point.

Now wait a second, I just accused you of not paying a debt; and further, even if you did pay it all back, the debt would not be resolved?

Well, that wouldn't be fair, would it? What's that you say?..."I always pay back, and that should eliminate the debt. I handle my responsibilities." In general I'm sure you do, but not this time.

The journal *Trends in Neurosciences* recently assembled decades of research on what happens to our brains when we accumulate a sleep debt, and then try to make up for it. What they discovered is alarming.

What is sleep debt? Simply, it's the amount of sleep we get, when subtracted from the amount we should get. If we should sleep eight hours a night and we get six, we then have a sleep debt of two hours.

According to authors Zachary Zamore and Sigrid Veasey of the Chronobiology and Sleep Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, there are three important things to know, which are contrary to what we've been told for years.

First, in building up sleep debt, we lose some of the ability to judge how that affects us.

Second, even if we do that catchup and sleep recovery, where we add, say, 9-10 hours for two or three nights per week, and we end up sleeping about the same total hours as if we

had slept eight hours per night, we may still suffer memory problems.

The third point is an attention-getter. Studies suggest that persistent sleep loss — even if we do our best to catch up — will increase our chances of neurodegenerative disorders, which include dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease.

Zamore and Veasey concede that for many people, sleep deprivation is a normal part of life and is unlikely to change.

Nobody wants to think about developing one of those conditions, and to lose quality of life in their later years. However, that's not the only consideration.

Another study suggests that people who sleep fewer than six hours a night have a 30 percent higher chance of becoming obese than those who sleep between seven and nine hours.

Poor sleep habits can lead to poor eating, lack of exercise, and declining health. This may be at least part of the explanation for Guam's high rate of diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses.

I admit that I've had a weight issue for a fair part of my life, and it's been the hardest to deal with when I don't sleep well.

If all that isn't enough to get you to want to sleep more, still another study concludes that lack of sleep ruins sex drive. In men, it also is said to drop testosterone levels.

People are also just grumpier when they don't sleep enough, and that likely contributes to many of the behavioral problems we see in the workplace. We also know that lack of sleep impacts productivity, and profitability.

(Con't.)

Employers, talk to your workers about sleep, and how not getting enough can make life more difficult.

In most of my training courses, I survey the attendees on how many hours of sleep they usually get.

The average is between five and six, which tells me that the average worker in Guam is without any doubt, sleep-deprived.

You and I can come up with all the reasons we want for why we can't sleep more. Many are legitimate, but that won't matter in the long run.

If you're getting six hours or less, find a way to get to seven. If you're at seven, try for eight.

Persistent sleep deprivation comes with a cost, one that none of us are going to want to pay.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

