
Sleep If Your Body Needs It

Here's a reality I live with, which I didn't mention in the book: I have a body which simply shutdowns; when that happens, I can't continue my activities effectively without a nap.

When I'm so sleep-deprived that nothing stimulates my mind any more, I'll take a nap, regardless of the circumstances. I know not everyone can nap at will. I can, so I use it to 'catch up' when I can. I'll often take a nap behind my desk at the office. I don't fight it, because even a five-minute nap is better than nothing.

My body knows its needs. The naps are not the goal in themselves. They serve a purpose; they help to invigorate my body. I need that boost to do more work.

Everyone's life is different; you have to work your rest times around everything else you consider important. Sometimes you have no opportunity to squeeze in a nap. And you have to consider the wishes of those you live and work with.

I'm married; I have a family. Working or writing in the evening during 'family time' is frowned on, but my wife will let me nap if I'm tired.

So, I plan my naps. The only exception from that rule are my office 'shutdowns.' Those come unexpectedly, uninvited and are interrupted by coworkers most of the time. This morning, I knew I was exhausted because I worked till 2 am due to an emergency. I slept only 5 hours, and knew there was an intensive day ahead. Thus, I napped on the train during my entire commute to work.

It was a long day. It's evening now. I'm back on the train, and I'm using the time to write these words. I could have easily napped all the way home, too! However, I've already napped in my spare moments today. I napped on the train to work - the whole 45 minutes of it - and for about 10 minutes on a tram when commuting between a client's location and my office. As you'll realise, I haven't yet written a word today, and am unlikely to get the chance once I reach home.

I need to write everyday. Writers write. I'm sleep deprived and hungry, because it's Friday and I have fasted the whole day. My willpower is drained. If I don't write now, who knows? It may be the first day in 808 days when I don't write a word.

It would have been wiser, (from a productivity standpoint) to take a nap on the train and write later this evening in my home office, but you can see why I am writing now, in the hope for a nap at home.

I also apply discipline to any planned nap. I very rarely nap without setting an alarm clock. Almost every nap is precisely scheduled. I know the amount of work I have to do, I know my schedule, I know the circumstances and I know my current condition.

PS. My wife let me sleep in the evening for an hour; and I wrote over 700 words on the train. Plan your naps and get more done!

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What Works For Me:

I've learned to force naps on myself. Sometimes I'm 'very much awake', yet aware I'm sleep deprived, and know I'll be hard-pressed to find another opportunity for a nap that day.

If that's the case, I'll use the relaxation techniques I described in "*Bulletproof*:" I'll repeat my personal mission statement, pray or meditate. Nine times out of ten I'm asleep within five minutes.

This is what I do:

- I allow my body and mind to shutdown; I don't fight it.
- I use relaxing rituals. These put me to sleep in a matter of minutes.
- I set an alarm. If I didn't, I'd be almost guaranteed to oversleep. I'm constantly sleep-deprived, so I cannot trust I'll wake up on my own at the end of my planned nap.

My Suggestions for You:

Take a nap when you can.

- **Make a plan** to fit the naps you need around the other obligations you have.

'Do it Now! If you don't, there will be no results tomorrow.'

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