



Conscious Life presents

# SLEEP SUPER CONFERENCE

## The Four Pillars of Deep Sleep

Guest: Alex Howard

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### [00:00:03] Alex Howard

Hi, I'm Alex Howard, and welcome to this webinar, where we're going to be exploring The Four Pillars of Deep Sleep. This webinar is also to serve a bit of an introduction to some of the key principles within the Sleep Super Conference.

One of the things that I love about producing these conferences is bringing together so many different experts on one topic. These areas we explore like trauma, fatigue, anxiety, relationships and in this conference, sleep, there's so many different facets and elements that can be really critical to our journey of healing.

Ultimately, so much of what it's about is finding our own personal pathway. And, so, with these introductory webinars, what I hope to do is to give you almost a buffet of some of the different ideas and principles that you're going to hear from with the dozens of experts that we're talking to as part of the event.

And, so, what I'm trying to do with The Four Pillars Of Sleep is really give you a taste and a flavor of some of the ideas that you can go much deeper into as you explore the event.

So, in this session, I'm going to talk a little bit briefly about my background. We'll talk about the neurology of sleep. We'll talk about what these Four Pillars of Deep Sleep are. We'll talk about some practical guidance for how you can address working with each of the pillars.

We'll also look briefly at my reset framework, which is from my twelve week online coaching program, The RESET Program, and how that framework can really help us understand how you can address working with calming and resetting your nervous system, which often has a dramatic impact on not just the quantity of our sleep, but also the quality of our sleep.

So, just a little bit about my background. I've been working in this area now for nearly two decades. My interest in the field of sleep was actually catalyzed through my own experience of ME Chronic Fatigue Syndrome as a teenager.

I spent seven years on my own healing journey and the first two years was a fairly desperate time of waiting for someone else to find the answers, before I realized that if I wanted the circumstances of my life to be different, then I was going to have to be the one to change them.

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And, I then spent five years on a very proactive healing journey. I took, at one point, 70 supplements a day. That's not something that I recommend. I saw dozens of different practitioners, I read over 500 books, and I didn't find one answer.

What I found was many answers, and really that was the essence of the next thing here, of setting up the Optimum Health Clinic, which for the last 18 years has worked with well over 10,000 patients in over 50 countries around the world, supporting people suffering from fatigue related conditions with sleep issues, working with anxiety, working with healing trauma as well.

As part of this work, I've published research in the British Medical Journal Open, in Psychology and Health, in the Journal of Integral Theory and Practice. As a clinic, we published research in Medical Hypotheses, amongst other journals as well.

More so, the creator of The RESET Program. I mentioned a moment ago, The RESET Program is a twelve week online coaching program, which has been enormously successful over recent years, with many thousands of people going through the training.

We've also been training practitioners for the last 15 years in our Therapeutic Coaching methodology. Just very briefly, Therapeutic Coaching, which is really the framework behind much of what we'll talk about in this session together as well, is a methodology and framework which integrates key elements of traditional psychotherapeutic models with solution focused coaching models.

Ultimately, the strap line is: learning how to heal the past, but also to be able to live in the now, and to create our future the way that we want it to be. This is a two year part-time training that people can join from anywhere in the world, and you can find more information at [therapeuticcoaching.com](https://therapeuticcoaching.com).

So, to come into a little bit of what we're going to start talking about here, I think it's helpful to define, when we're talking about sleep, what are we talking about? Ultimately, what is sleep?

Well, there's lots of ways that we could define sleep, and there's lots of ways we could look at it. I think a very simple frame is to recognize that sleep is ultimately an act of deep surrender.

The rest of the time, we at least have the illusion of being in control of ourselves, our environment, the world around us. Our thinking mind, our doing activities, is what gives us that sense of control and identity in our lives. When we sleep, what we're actually doing is we're deeply surrendering. In that moment, we are trusting and we are letting go, and we're effectively letting our unconscious take over.

Now, that act of surrender can be a very beautiful, wonderful experience. When we're very, very tired, it's a very satisfying experience to fall asleep. And, when we are coming from a place of a maladaptive stress response, when we have a dysregulated nervous system, then it can feel very difficult to surrender. It can feel like we need to be in this state of constant activity in our mind or in our body.

This manifests in different ways in sleep issues. It may be for some people that we work with, they can't get to sleep. So, the problem is that state of surrender in the first place. Other people, they're able to get to sleep, but they can't stay asleep. For other people, the issue is they can get to sleep and they can stay asleep, but they don't get good quality of sleep.

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Finally, people can have the issue where they can get to sleep, they can stay asleep, but they can't stop sleeping. That's often a deeper issue around fatigue and understanding what's happening on a deeper level in terms of our body's cellular energy production and, for example, a lot of the work that we do with fatigue related conditions.

So, I want to talk a little bit about the neurology of sleep and the different states that our brainwave patterns can be in. I think this is particularly helpful for also understanding another key principle that we're going to talk about.

Often what's happening at night, when we're either sleeping or attempting to sleep, is a manifestation of what is happening during the day. And if certain things are out of balance during the day, that out of balance-ness, if that's a word, will manifest in our experience when we're attempting to sleep at night. And we'll talk more about this as we come into this webinar.

So these four states or the four brainwave patterns that we can be in are Beta, Alpha, Theta, and Delta. I'll give a very brief description of each, and then we'll come into a bit more detail.

So, Beta is effectively our busy, active mind. Alpha is effectively a state of awareness where we're awake, but our mind is not active. Theta is either daydreaming when we are awake, or it is dreaming sleep when we're asleep. Delta is a state of deep sleep.

So to break this down a little bit more, a state of Beta is what I imagine my brain would be in right now. I'm concentrating on what I'm saying, the way I'm saying it, hoping that I'm making sense as you're watching or listening to this.

In a sense, it's a state of concentrated thought and higher mental arousal. If we're in a stimulating conversation, or we're in a learning situation, or we're doing something that requires our concentration and/or our attention, we're likely to be in a state of Beta.

When we're in a state of Beta, also our nervous system is active. It's not necessarily overactive, but our nervous system is active. And we're producing a certain amount of stress hormones to be able to fuel the activity that we are doing. But we're doing that in a way which is healthy and in balance.

A state of Alpha is a state of relaxed thought and gentle mental arousal. Now, this may be the state that you're in as you're watching this or listening to this. This is the state we may be in if we're in very relaxed, easy conversation, hanging out with people that we're close to. A state of Alpha may also be a state that we go into in some meditation, or some prayer practice, but it's where we are awake, but we are in a calm and relaxed state.

We then have Theta. Theta is a state of daydreaming if we're awake, or dreaming sleep, if we are asleep. One of the things that is interesting is our nervous system doesn't distinguish between something that is real and something that is vividly imagined.

That's why, for example, you can just follow an example of this with me. Let's imagine that you're holding in your left hand a lemon. You can just feel the slightly cool and slightly bumpy edges of the lemon. Then, maybe you put it to your nose and you smell it a little bit, and you can just get that little bit of lemony smell. And, then, let's imagine you take a knife in your right hand, and you put the lemon down, and then you just cut a little bit off the lemon.

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Then, you squeeze it. You can smell that much stronger lemon smell as you do that. And, then, you imagine biting into the lemon and feeling the flavor of the lemon. Now, if you imagine doing that, the chances are that you have a little bit of a salvation happening in your mouth, and you can get a real sense of the experience of that, but there's no lemon. What there is, is the imagining of something.

When we're in a state of Theta, when we're in a state of either daydreaming when we're awake, or dreaming when we're asleep, our nervous system experiences that as though some, or even all of, that experience is actually happening. We'll come back to that in a moment.

Delta is a state of deep sleep. It's in deep sleep that, for example, we release growth hormone. Growth hormone is used for many things in our body, but particularly it's used for healing and repair. So if, for example, we've done a big workout in the gym, and our body needs to repair from that, growth hormone is one of the ways that it will do that.

Now, let's imagine that you have an excess of Beta during the day. Let's imagine that you are hyperactive in your nervous system. Perhaps you're in what I often refer to as a maladaptive stress response. That's a stress response which has become normalized to being in a heightened state of arousal.

We all have different homeostatic balances (homeostasis effectively meaning safe and stable); certain balances in our body that get dysregulated because we get normalized to being in a state of stress. So, let's imagine that for various reasons, you have an excess of Beta during the day. Now, that means that you're going to have less Alpha just by the fact that rather than maybe it being a 50/50, it becomes a 75/25. It means your brain is working harder during the day, and getting less rest during the day.

Now, one of the reasons why we dream is we dream to process our experiences, our thoughts, our reflections, our replaying of things from the day. So, if we have an excess of Beta, we need more dreaming sleep. We need more of that time to metabolize and digest and process our experiences. So, that means we have more Theta sleep.

Also, if you imagine that, let's say, here is a state of deep sleep, and for normal healthy balances, you're up here, you've got a little bit of distance to travel to that deep sleep. But, if you're up here, you've got a much longer journey to go on in that act of surrender to actually reach, and to stay in, that state of deep sleep.

And because we can't distinguish between what's real and what's vividly imagined, having a lot of dreaming sleep is tiring. It means that our system doesn't get to repair and to replenish. It also means if we're having more Theta, more dreaming sleep, and less Delta, we're releasing less growth hormone. There's less of that deep repair work that happens in deep sleep.

So, I want to track back to a point I made a few minutes ago. What happens at night is often a reflection, or a manifestation of, what is out of balance during the day. So, if your system is overactive and overstimulated during the day, you may have normalized that, that may have become your new homeostasis. But, that excess of Beta means less Alpha. It means more dreaming sleep, it means less Delta sleep.

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To go back to the different kinds of sleep challenges we may have. It makes it more difficult to get to sleep because our brain is too stimulated. It makes it more difficult to stay asleep because we're not fully in deep sleep, we're more on the surface of sleep, and therefore we're more easily distracted and woken up.

We also get less repair work, i.e. the release of the growth hormone and the healing that happens in Delta, in deep sleep. So, we don't get the quality of sleep, which, by the way, over time can become increasingly depleting for our body, which may result in us actually needing a lot more sleep.

So, what that ultimately means is that if we have that excess of Beta, we don't get enough Alpha, we have more Theta, we don't get enough Delta. But what's happening is that overstimulation during the day is fundamentally affecting our sleep at night.

If we can rebalance what's happening in our system during the day, we can then start to transform what's happening in our sleep at night. I think it's also worth then exploring how do we often respond when we have poor sleep? What do we often do to try and fix our sleep and to try and make things easier? Often what happens is our nervous system becomes more activated. We start to strategize and think "I need to get to bed earlier, or I need to do this, or I do that".

And, then if things don't go the way that we need them to, we become more and more activated as a result. In a sense, we try to think our way to a state of sleep. It's like trying to think our way to feeling safe. The thing is that safety is a feeling. Safety is not something that you can think through all the different scenarios that might happen and actually overstimulate to wire your nervous system as a result of it, which means you feel less safe.

It's the same with sleep. If we're trying to think our way to a place of that deep surrender, we're actually getting more and more stimulated, and more and more agitated.

We could talk about it in another way. In a sense, there's a relationship between our mind and our emotions. But the feeling of surrender, the feeling of safety that we're looking for, exists in our body, not in our mind.

So, we can't think our way to a feeling of safety. So, what happens is we feel agitated or unsafe, or we feel anxious about not sleeping. Our mind speeds up to try and protect us, but then we disconnect from our body and we feel more unsafe.

Put it another way, we worry about not sleeping. Our mind speeds up to try and solve the problem. We become more dysregulated in our nervous system and then we worry we're not going to sleep, so we speed up even further.

So, one of the key things when it comes to working with sleep is to break this pattern, to break this cycle. The challenge also is the typical approach to sleep issues often make it worse. So, we try to sleep, we try to not be worried about the fact that we're not going to sleep. So, we put more effort in, but as a result of putting more effort in, we become increasingly dysregulated and increasingly agitated.

One of my realizations over the years on my own healing journey from chronic fatigue was different types of fatigue require different types of intervention. The same is true with sleep. There are different

types of sleep issues, and they require different approaches. Now we may have a number of these different... we're going to talk about four pillars in a moment.

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We may have factors, and all four of these pillars we need to address, but we need to target them effectively, or it may just be one of them, is what we need to work with.

So, let's talk through what these four pillars are. The first is mental. This is patterns that are happening in our mind. The second is emotional. This is patterns happening in our heart and in our emotions. The third is physical. This is things that may be happening in our physical body. The fourth is behavioral. This may be patterns and habits around sleep hygiene, or lack of sleep hygiene.

Now before we come to each of these specifically, let's just talk about some of the key principles here. So as I mentioned, we can experience all four at once, or different ones at different times. Certain interventions work better with each type, but all interventions will often help all of the types of sleep issues.

Also, ultimately what we're talking about here is learning to listen to your own body, and your own experience to identify which you are experiencing. Something that I talk about a lot in my body of work is the importance of building our own inner listening system, our own inner compass, our ability to identify our thoughts, our emotions, our experience and actually be in relationship with that, as opposed to our mind dictating to our body or trying to override or ignore our experience we're learning to work with.

And this is something that particularly came from my work with chronic fatigue, that often people were told, because mainstream medicine couldn't find immediate explanations of people's symptoms, they were often told there was nothing wrong with them. There was something wrong with medicine, not something wrong with them. But then people were encouraged to push through their bodies, which then made symptoms worse.

So we spend a lot of time focusing on encouraging people to listen to their bodies. What we discovered in doing that is it wasn't just listening to people's physical bodies, but it was also listening to their wider experience. And that can be very helpful in terms of really making sense of what's going on for us and then taking frameworks, such as we're about to talk about, and learning to apply it to our own lived experience.

In a sense, and this is one of my favorite phrases, "if you can see it, you don't have to be it". If we have awareness of what's actually happening, that awareness empowers us to do something different. Because if you can see a habit or behavior and you can recognize that it's happening, that seeing it allows you to make a different choice. If you can't see it, then you're just the victim to what's happening.

So my hope is, as we go through these Four Pillars of Deep Sleep, we can bring more awareness that can then empower you to change.

So, the first pillar, the mental pillar, we talked a little bit about this already when we talked about the brainwave patterns. This is where we're able to recognize that we have an overactive or a racing mind, that we have too much activation in our system.

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Perhaps you're replaying events or conversations. Perhaps something happened in the day, and you wish you had said something or hadn't said something, or somebody else said something or didn't say something, and you're running it through and you're replaying it.

You're doing what I call mental tennis, you're going back and forth on something in your mind. Or, maybe what you're doing is you're running future scenarios, but often when we do that we're not running the best scenarios, we're running the worst case scenarios. Perhaps we're trying to think our way to a feeling of safety by running through all the things that might go wrong.

It may also be that we're tired and we're wired, like our physical body is drained, but our mind, our mental patterns are running as a way to try and unconsciously stimulate the adrenaline and the cortisol that will actually give us the capacity to function.

Now we'll come back to, in a little bit, some of the ways that we can work with some of these mental patterns, but let's just go through the other pillars first.

So then there's the emotional pillar. This is where we may just feel unsafe. This may be that we've experienced some trauma, which we all have in different ways in our lives, and emotionally we just don't feel safe and, by the way, going back to what I was saying earlier, sleep is an act of surrender.

So if we don't feel safe, that surrender is more difficult, because in that surrender we need to be able to let go. But if the environment doesn't feel emotionally safe, then it's not so easy to do that.

It may be that we're feeling emotionally sensitive. It may be there's a lot of emotions and feelings that are coming up that we're not giving space to. And in a sense what sometimes happens is that we spend the daytime ignoring our feelings and emotions, because we don't know what to do with them. Perhaps we don't think it's okay to feel them, perhaps we have judgments about them.

But then the challenge becomes that when we get to the night time, we haven't got the same distractions anymore, and so those feelings and emotions that we've been pushing away suddenly start to push back and they start to demand our attention. This can sometimes present as feeling emotionally shut down and numb.

Sometimes the people that most need to open up to and feel their emotions will say to me, "well I don't feel anything about it, I'm fine". And what fine means is actually they're numb, that they've gone into a trauma freeze response, and then they're just not feeling at all.

Another sign that there's emotional healing work that needs to happen is we're easily triggered. So, the classic example I give is that we're driving around a roundabout, and a car cuts in front of us, and in that moment, just before that moment, we're feeling relatively calm and relaxed and everything's fine, and then this happens and we had this really big emotional reaction.

It's almost like there's a black sack of emotions that we've not been processing that we're carrying around with us. Then, the lid comes off and all of this emotion comes exploding out.

Maybe the issue was that we're not feeling seen in our lives. Maybe the issue is that we're not getting to take up the space we need to, but something happened in that moment that's triggered, it's not really about someone driving badly, it's triggered all of this stuff which is not being processed.

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It may be that we're just confused about how we feel. Maybe there's been so many feelings happening or things we didn't know what to do with that we're just in a state of overwhelm, or a state of confusion. So you can see how when our emotions are out of balance in this way, that the act of surrender at sleep becomes more difficult.

The third then is physical. There's all kinds of physical things that may be happening in our body which affect our ability to sleep. Because if for example our hormones are out of balance, it may be that our cortisol levels are too high, which is a message to our body to be active and awake, which may result in our melatonin levels being too low. And melatonin of course is the hormone of sleep.

This may present with things like racing heart, shallow breathing, tight muscles. Maybe we just feel agitated. We feel like we can't settle. It may be that we're experiencing physical symptoms. It may be we've got headaches, or neck pain, or back pain, or digestive issues, that, again, are signs of things physically being out of balance.

Now, if things are physically out of balance in some of the ways that I'm talking about, you can do everything else right, but your body is just not going to be able to sleep until that balance is returned.

The fourth pillar to deep sleep is behavioral. This could be things like bad sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene being the things that we need to do in the right sequence in the right way, to give ourselves the best possible chance of getting good sleep.

So, it may be for example that we're too stimulated before bed. Maybe we're doing a lot of screen time and our system is being wired and being impacted by that.

It might be that you're exercising too late in the day for your body. Now, we're all different. And I'm not someone that is about imposing a rigid set of rules on everyone.

I know people that can exercise late into the evening and they sleep great. I know other people that wouldn't exercise, myself included, will not want to exercise first thing in the morning for love nor money, but it's finding the point in the day that works for you.

So, for me that tends to be at the end of the work day to burn off some of the energy that gets built just being sat down all day, but then to have 3, 4 hours afterwards so my system can then calm and settle, and then be ready to go to sleep. So it's finding out where those balances are for you.

It can also be poor nutritional choices. This is a really interesting one because there are some professionals that will say that you shouldn't eat a certain number of hours before you go to sleep. There are others that say it's really important to eat just before you go to sleep. The truth is, and we'll get into this in a little bit, there are biochemical individual differences and different people's bodies need different things.

But if we haven't got the habits and the behaviors that are best going to support us getting good sleep, again we're going to find ourselves having challenges.

Recognizing the type of sleep issues that we are experiencing will help us then find effective interventions. As we go through this conference, one of the things which I think will be really helpful is you're going to hear different experts speak to these different types of issues.



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You will hear from functional medicine doctors talking about how to work with the physiological. You'll hear from people talking about working with natural sunlight and how that impacts on hormones. You'll hear people talking about the importance of things like meditation and yoga and movement. People talking about the importance of working with the mental patterns of healing emotional trauma.

This is not about a one size fits all approach. It's about finding what's going to be most helpful for you.

So let's walk through some best practice and key principles for each of these four pillars. And as I say, we'll go into all of this in much more detail in the interviews as part of the Sleep Super Conference.

So, how do we work with some of the mental patterns that can impact on our sleep?

Well, remember what I've been saying, you can't think your way to a feeling of safety, but another way, you can't think your way to sleep. So we need to have ways of working on calming our mind and breaking the thought patterns that can get in the way.

There are many different ways that we can do that. We have a particular focus on that as part of, for example, my RESET program. But look out for interviews as part of the conference, where we're working with some of the beliefs, some of the mental patterns, some of the thoughts, and how we can learn to break those patterns and train our system into a new way of being.

Anything that helps work on calming the mind, anything from meditation to mindfulness to mindful movements, breaking those patterns will be helpful because ultimately, what we need to do is get out of our minds and into our body.

Sleep is an embodied experience. Sleep is about particularly getting good quality deep sleep. It's about our body entering a state of deep surrender.

I used to say a lot around healing from chronic fatigue. For our body to heal, we have to be in it, i.e. not in our mind and disconnected. We could also extend that here. For good quality, deep sleep, we need to be in our body, not locked in our mind.

So then working with emotions, often what we need to be able to even feel safe, to feel our emotions, is we need boundaries. We need to be able to say yes to the things we want more of, but also no to the things we want less of. That may also be saying no to certain people we want to have less of.

We need to learn to slow down our inner world. To really connect to and to feel our emotions, we need to have things running slow enough that we can actually be in touch with and feel them.

Often to really process and to metabolize our emotions, we need the time and space to do so. If we're constantly busy and we're constantly rushing around, and then the only time that we slow down enough to feel is when we actually need to go to sleep, then the problem is going to be that it's going to be too much and be overwhelming, and we're going to be then just stuck in a state of frustration at the fact that we're not sleeping.

If we can make time and space in our lives, then we're able to be able to feel, to process, we may need some support in doing this as well.

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One of the questions I ask a lot working with people therapeutically is how are you relating to how you feel? Are you judging your feelings? Are you rejecting your feelings? Are you shaming them? Or, are you encouraging them? Are you inviting them? Are you allowing them?

We need to be able to do the emotional healing that we need, so when we go to sleep at night it's not all then showing up. And by the way, often if we're not in touch with our feelings and emotions, and then it tries to come to the surface, we don't necessarily experience the emotions, we experience our attempt to get away from the emotions, which often will be anxiety.

The whole system speeds up to disconnect and to race and to get away from. What we experience is anxiety, but what actually is happening is it's our system's way of trying to avoid and trying to get away from those feelings and emotions.

And it may be that you need some help with processing and metabolizing and digesting your emotions. That may be learning tools and techniques, things like EFT tapping, it may be doing some work with a practitioner that can also help you do that as well.

Let's talk about working with the physical. Now these are all big areas, this is a particularly big area of its own. Firstly, if you're going to sleep, trying to go to sleep at night, and you're physically able to exercise but you're not moving your body, what you may experience is being mentally tired, like you may have worked hard and tired your brain, but there's lots of excess energy and buzziness in your body, and that's why you can't sleep.

Now if you have a chronic illness, for example, exercising more than you're able to is not going to be something that helps you. But if you have capacity but you're not moving your body, then actually getting the right exercise for you, at the right point in the day, will allow you to disperse that stress energy in your system.

But also working with the physical is often looking at the imbalances that may be there in your system, things like blood sugar. I mentioned a little bit earlier around food. For some people, eating too soon before they sleep means there's food that's stuck there in the digestive system, and that's uncomfortable and it stops them from sleeping.

For other people, the problem is if they don't eat a snack before they sleep, they may get to sleep, but then woke up at 2, 3 o'clock in the morning feeling a bit edgy and anxious because blood sugars dropped.

And when blood sugar drops, we release stress hormones to compensate. And so you feel wired and unable to sleep, and actually having a snack before you go to bed is the thing that would stop you from doing that. Now, that snack shouldn't be lots of carbohydrates, lots of sugar. It may be a protein snack or it may be a piece of fruit. Different things are going to work for different people.

You may well want to investigate your hormones. There's lots of different ways and approaches, and we'll talk about this in some of the interviews. I'm not going to go into this in a lot of detail here, but it may be, for example, as I mentioned a bit earlier, cortisol is too high, melatonin is too low. It may be that some of your other hormones may be out of balance.

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That can really impact on our ability to get to sleep, stay asleep and get quality sleep. From a functional medicine perspective, often at the heart of many of the imbalances we can have is issues with our digestion. If we're not breaking down and metabolizing food in an effective way, then often what happens is that we have symptoms as a result of that.

They may be obvious digestive symptoms, but they may not be. They may also be that our hormones have gone out of balance. It may be that we're getting brain fog. It may be that our ability just to feel at ease in ourselves is gone out of balance.

So working with a functional medicine trained nutritional therapist, or a functional medicine trained doctor, to look at these functional balances in our body can also be really important. And just to define what I mean by functional balances, mainstream medicine often looks at very broad reference ranges. It takes 100 people, finds an average, and then finds a range within that.

But some of us are more sensitive than that. It may be that something that for one person is something that's a subtle change that they're okay with, for us, impacts on symptoms, and may be the difference that makes the difference in our ability to get quality of sleep. So working with a practitioner to understand that can be incredibly important.

Then, working with the behavioral, is understanding what routines do you need? How can you help your system to wind down? What does your screen time look like?

One tip that can work for some people is to have a hot bath a few hours before it's time to go to sleep because that will heat your body temperature, which will then gradually cool, and that will mirror what used to happen in caveman days where it would get cooler when it was night time, which in a sense was a trigger to our system to go to sleep.

It may be that what works really well for you is not having any screen time or stimulation for 2 hours before bed, or 30 minutes before bed. It may be that you're someone that the sleep hygiene piece doesn't matter so much, but experimenting with, and trying different things is helpful.

I would then hold those things with a light touch. A number of times I've worked with people with sleep issues and actually the problem is they've got so many rules of what should happen, what shouldn't happen, what must happen for them to sleep, that the inability to perfectly fulfill all of the rules becomes a stress, which then ramps up cortisol, ramps up the nervous system, and then makes it more difficult for them to sleep.

And actually dropping some of those rules is also helpful. So, more rules is not necessarily better. It's having the right rules held in the right way.

So, hopefully you can get a sense of, by understanding these different types of issues, we can then target intervention based upon them.

So I'm curious, as we've gone through mental, emotional, physical and behavioral, these Four Pillars of Deep Sleep, as you reflect now, which type of sleep issues are you experiencing, and what can you do to target it?

**[00:40:32]**

Do you need to work on calming your mind? Do you need to learn to give more space to your emotions? Do you need to address some of the physical imbalances in your body? Or do you need to look at the behavioral habits and the patterns of how you're approaching sleep, and whether they are helping you or not helping you?

And as I mentioned, as we go through this conference, this conference is speaking to all four of these pillars. So, my hope is also by making this a bit of a buffet or a menu of different areas, this will help you select and choose the dialogues and the interviews which are perhaps most likely to be helpful to, and relevant for you.

So, to summarize what we've been saying so far, some of the key principles: awareness. If you can see it, you don't have to be it. This whole webinar in a sense is partly about raising that awareness.

Then, focusing on calming your system during the day. Remember what I said about Beta, Alpha, Theta and Delta? The more Beta in the day, the less Alpha, the more dreaming sleep at night, the less deep sleep at night. And so if you can work on calming your nervous system, that act of surrender of sleep is going to be that much easier.

Also, working with the underlying emotional issues. What happens at night is often a reflection of what's not being done during the day. If we're not processing and working with our emotions healthily, that's often arising at night time.

Transforming the underlying physical issues. If we've got hormone imbalances, digestive issues, if we've got some immune load that's happening, we need to bring that into balance to then be able to support our sleep. Then remember also working with sleep hygiene and behavioral patterns that will support, not inhibit, our sleep.

I also just want to say before we finish, a few words about a framework that I've also found very helpful that actually brings together a lot of this. This is the model behind my twelve week online coaching program, The RESET Program.

The RESET framework is firstly, to recognize, R for recognize, what state is your system in, or in the context of the four pillars, which of these patterns may be happening?

E for examine. How is this state being created? Which of these pillars are, for example, out of balance? What's actually going on?

And then S for stop. We want to stop the unhelpful thoughts, patterns and we want to effectively rewire our brain. If our system has got used to being overstimulated, we want to calm that and, again, mindfulness, movement meditation can be helpful with that.

So we recognize, we examine, and we stop. But, then, we need to work with the emotions to connect to, and to process, the emotions underlying what we are experiencing, and having the tools and the strategies to really do that emotional work and healing.

We then ultimately want to learn to transform our relationship with ourselves and our body. That particularly can include working with our inner critic, that part of our mind that's often judging, criticizing, beating us up, telling ourselves that we're rubbish, we're wrong, we're this, we're that.

**[00:44:18]**

It's a helpful framework to bring together the four pillars, what we've talked about, recognize what state we're in, examine how it's being created, stop the unhelpful patterns, work with our emotions, and then transform our relationship with ourselves.

If you want to find out more about The RESET Program, I'm sure as we come to the other side of the Sleep Super Conference, we'll give you some more information on it. I really want to encourage you also to check out the other bonus gifts as part of the conference.

If you're watching this before the conference starts, there's some other sessions from the conference which will give you a taste and a flavor of what's coming up.

If you're watching this during the conference, then I really hope you're enjoying these interviews. We spend so much care and thought finding the best guests and really bringing the best we can from them. And, really, in recognition of this core principle, there isn't one answer, there are many answers, and it's finding the right answers to support your healing.

Thank you for watching. I hope this has been helpful. I look forward to talking with you in the many interviews as part of the Sleep Super Conference.