



Conscious Life presents

SLEEP SUPER CONFERENCE

Strategies for sleep

Guest: Dr Nicole Moshfegh

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[00:00:10] Meagen Gibson

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, cohost of the Sleep Super Conference.

Today I'm speaking with Dr Nicole Moshfegh, a clinical and health service psychologist, author, and professor.

She's the founder and director of We Rise Psychology, a clinical psychology practice in California, which specializes in providing culturally responsive, evidence based care to overachieving adults and teenagers struggling with perfectionism, imposter syndrome, anxiety, insomnia, and burnout.

She's additionally an adjunct professor at Pepperdine University, where she teaches graduate level courses on sociocultural bases of behavior. Dr Moshfegh is the author of *The Book Of Sleep: 75 Strategies To Relieve Insomnia*.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh, thank you so much for being with us today.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Thank you for having me. I'm excited to talk to you all about sleep.

Meagen Gibson

And I actually found you through your book and really appreciated it. It's so clear that you have an extensive background in direct care and practical, applicable techniques to help people from this book. So I'm excited to interview you.

So if you could start by explaining to people the three ways people might struggle with sleep, as well as why good quality sleep is so important to our mental health.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Absolutely. So, there are a lot of ways people can struggle with their sleep. But if we're talking about insomnia in particular, typically people will have a sleep onset problem, meaning that it might either take them a really long time to fall asleep, and by really long time, I mean typically more than 20 to 30 minutes, at least three or more times per week.

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So we're all going to have times where we can't fall asleep or are struggling with our sleep. That's totally normal. But if it's consistently happening, that's when it's a problem.

Or, some people might have sleep maintenance issues, meaning that they might wake up frequently in the middle of the night, or they might wake up for one or two really long periods of time in the middle of the night, so their quality of their sleep ends up being really disruptive. And I'll get to that in a second.

And the third one is if you're waking up earlier than you intend to. So maybe you plan on waking up at 08:00 A.M. usually and you're waking up maybe 30 or more minutes earlier than you planned.

And so those are the three, when we're talking about insomnia, those are the three different types. And a lot of people will have a mixture of all three, or they might have one or two.

However, some people also just feel generally dissatisfied with their quality of their sleep. And if that's happening on a consistent basis, that might be something you want to take a look into a little bit more as well.

Meagen Gibson

And I appreciate those distinctions because I hadn't really put it together until I read your book, that I'm someone who on occasion has trouble falling asleep.

I have a partner who, I'll wake up and I'll be like, how was two to four? And he's like, well, here's all the mental math that I got done from two to four. And I have another extended member of my family who wakes up at 04:00 A.M. And can't get back to sleep.

So there's different types of sleep struggles and maybe different ways that either lifestyle, behavior, thought patterns, what you're prone to, is going to impact that, right?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Absolutely. Yeah.

Meagen Gibson

And so how does great sleep or, by the converse, poor sleep affect our mental health?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

That's a good question. And I want to put a little bit of a disclaimer on this one because typically when I talk about sleep, usually the people that are tuning in are the people who are already struggling with their sleep, who may already have insomnia.

And let's try to soften the edges around this because I think, which we might get to a little bit later, anxiety around sleep can end up making your sleep problems worse.

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And so sleep is very important, for sure, but it's not the only thing that's important. We want to try to take a balanced approach. That being said, of course, if you're sleeping well, it's going to give you better performance during the day, typically.

You're going to be able to remember things more clearly. It will help you to be able to have better social skills and be able to better manage your affect, your emotion regulation.

On the other end, if we are consistently not sleeping well for long periods of time, that tends to contribute to maybe some negative health consequences in the long run. It can affect anything from our cognition and our memory down to other health factors like the way our metabolism works, our heart, our blood vessel system.

And so we want to try to make sure to pay attention if it's a consistent problem so that we're not falling into a category where we're going to see really long term, detrimental health consequences.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. And the underlying word that keeps coming up for me as you're speaking is stress. Right. Because if you're under a ton of stress, you might have sleep disruptions, and then sleep disruptions are going to cause you stress if you're more irritable and you've got less resource left because of a lack of sleep. And so it's this unfortunate feedback loop that can build on itself if you get too bedded into it, pardon the phrase.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

No, you're right. You're absolutely right. That tends to be what happens. And it's hard to keep that all in balance. So we want to try to just pay attention to what our thoughts are around our sleep.

Meagen Gibson

Right, exactly. And we'll get more into that later because that's a super huge part of it as well.

So are there really different factors that play into the different types of sleep disruption? So, for example, is there a correlation between sedatives and middle insomnia, or blue light and sleep onset, which is trouble falling asleep? Are there specific things that can impact somebody's sleep disruptions more than others?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yeah. That's a good question. So, it's going to vary from person to person. So typically what we do is when someone is having chronic problems with their sleep, we want to try to have them keep track of their sleep with a sleep diary.

And that's a subjective measure of your sleep. So it's not an objective measure where you need to go get a sleep study. We just want to see what you think is going on, what do you think is happening with your sleep?

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And we might track that for a week or two to get a baseline sense of what's happening. And from there we can try to figure out, okay, what is it that might be going on that could be contributing to the sleep issue?

So you mentioned blue light. That's a really good point, actually. When we're looking at trouble with falling asleep, blue light, for some people might play into that. Because blue light, as a lot of people probably already know this by now, it's the same spectrum we receive from the sun.

And the sun is one of the main ways that our brain, our body can perceive that it's time to be alert, it's time to be awake. And so if we're getting too much blue light, especially in the evening, that's going to trick our brain into thinking that it's still time to be alert and awake.

And that's going to then delay the production of what we call melatonin or the sleepy hormone in our body. And so then you might find it harder and harder to fall asleep at a time that you like to ideally be asleep. So that could be one factor.

When you're discussing things like sleep aids, like benzodiazepines or what we call Z drugs like ambien, lunesta, things like that, this is a tricky topic with a lot of people because what we actually know from a lot of the research is that, although a lot of people might find that they think they're getting more sleep on these drugs, from a lot of data we've collected, we know that the drugs are actually not really giving you much more sleep.

It just tricks you into thinking you are, by way of what we call the placebo effect. And we might also feel a bit more sedated. So we might not be remembering if we're actually up in the middle of the night versus when we're sleeping naturally without any drugs, we tend to be a little more aware of what's going on. So we might attribute that to the pill making me sleep better.

But with sleeping pills in particular, and we could talk about this forever, basically what we want to know is it's typically suppressing deep sleep. So you're getting less deep sleep when you're taking these types of sleep aids. And so that's going to affect your overall sleep quality.

And so that's typically going to make you feel not as refreshed during the day. So it could be a factor that's affecting how you're sleeping as well. So there's a lot of things we want to take into account, person by person, to see what might be contributing.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, and I also want to talk about alcohol because I wasn't actually just talking about prescription drugs. I know alcohol is a sedative as well, and a lot of people see a glass of wine or something like that. I'm not even talking about troublesome substance use or anything like that. I'm just saying a glass of wine before bed might make you feel like, oh, it's a nice nightcap, I fall right off to sleep.

And it has, albeit different, the same effects as a prescription drug where it gives you the perception that you're having an easier time falling asleep, but the quality of your sleep is not quite as deep. Right?

[00:10:16] Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yes, you're absolutely right about that. So alcohol is a sedative, so initially it might help you to fall asleep faster, but then you're going to see almost a similar effect to what I was saying about the sleeping pills, where it's going to mess with your overall sleep architecture.

So we cycle through different sleep stages throughout the night. Some are light stages of sleep, some are deeper stages of sleep. And with alcohol, it's going to produce less deep sleep, like I was saying. And so you're going to wake up not feeling as refreshed in the morning either.

And typically that's why we experience a hangover because it's actually messed with our sleep. So, yeah, we want to pay attention to any substances we're using, what we're eating, how much we're hydrating, how much water we're drinking. All these things can have an effect.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. In addition to sedatives, it's stimulants and even dark, I can't have dark chocolate at night. We can't have nice things.

But back to sleep quality, as you were saying before in the sleep stages, I'm glad you brought that up, because I don't think people understand why the different cycles of sleep that we normally go through, and I think from what I remember in my research we go through typically REM sleep and deep sleep, at least two cycles in a typical night of sleep. And those two cycles of sleep have different purposes for us and are important to our body and our brain, for that matter, in different ways. Can you say a little bit about that?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yes. We do cycle through different stages of sleep. There are four stages of sleep. About every 90 minutes or so, we're going through these stages. So, we have the non REM, or non rapid eye movement sleep. And then we have REM, or rapid eye movement sleep.

And we go through the lighter stages, N1 and N2 before we get into N3 sleep, which is the deepest stage of sleep. And that's typically where we're getting the most restorative benefits.

And then we go through a REM period and that's when we're doing most of our dreaming. And we're also processing things. We might be consolidating memory.

So, even though there are light stages of sleep, they're all equally important. So we want to make sure we're getting all of these stages. And the good news is, no matter how literal you're sleeping, you're still getting all the stages. So, you don't need to worry about that.

I know in recent years there have been a lot of sleep tracking devices that supposedly will report out how much deep sleep you're getting. You have to take that all with a grain of salt. They're typically not very accurate.

And like I said, all the stages are important. And really what we want to pay attention to is whether or not we're having a lot of disruptions in the middle of the night. So if we're waking up frequently or we're having long periods where we're awake in the middle of the night, what ends up happening is we end up being in light sleep overall, more than deep sleep.

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And so then, as I was saying before, we're not going to get as many restorative benefits. So that really disrupted sleep tends to have the most consequences. So what I like to say to people is that having a solid chunk of 6 hours is actually going to do much more for you than maybe 8 hours of really disruptive, choppy sleep.

Again, it sounds a little bit counterintuitive to a lot of people because we often hear about the quantity, but we really want to focus actually on quality more than quantity.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. So I know everybody, as we've already said, has struggled with sleep now and again on occasion, and you mentioned it a little bit earlier. But when is it time for somebody to seek help for sleep disruptions, or a low quality of sleep, or what they think might be a sleep problem?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

That is a great question. So, like you were already talking about, everyone's going to experience some disruption in their sleep here and there. That's totally normal. We're all human. We all have different stressors, especially nowadays, that we're facing.

So it's normal to have an acute period where for a few weeks you might not be sleeping well. For you to meet criteria for an insomnia disorder, or chronic insomnia issue, you have to be experiencing sleep issues for three months or more.

And during those three months, the sleep issues need to be present for three, at least three, times or more per week. Three nights or more per week. There are other criteria along with that. So it usually affects your daytime functioning as well on top of that.

So if you're meeting that threshold, then I would say definitely it's time to reach out. It's important to see if there are some measures you can take to help you.

But for some people, they might be experiencing an acute period where a major stressor came up and for a few weeks they've been having trouble with their sleep. You could wait it out and just try to practice what we call general sleep hygiene and do some relaxation and process what it is that's going on and see if it gets better.

However, for some people who are maybe a little more prone to anxiety already. If you're noticing that you're getting really anxious about your sleep and you're worrying about it a lot of the time, even if it's only been a few weeks, that might be a good idea just to reach out and see if there could be some things you can do to prevent it from getting any worse.

But what we know from research is that for the most part of most people who are experiencing an acute period of insomnia, it'll typically get better on its own. So just knowing that, for a lot of people, helps to soothe their anxiety about it, so the insomnia doesn't take on a life of its own.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. And from what I understand, the research, for most people, with exception, obviously, but people that report, I never sleep, I can't sleep, I don't sleep, they actually do sleep quite a lot.

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It's the perception of how much sleep they're getting that is feeding into their idea that they don't sleep. When we look at it, if they do a sleep study in an actual lab, it actually shows, actually, you did sleep quite a bit.

Now let's address why you feel like you didn't sleep, why you don't feel rested, all the other things that could be going on that contribute to the fact that you're not feeling rested. We're not trying to call anybody a liar. I know you don't feel rested, I know you don't feel like you sleep. But let's talk about what is happening and what you can do to help that feeling when you wake up.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Right. Absolutely. That's such a good point. And yes, it can feel a bit invalidating and maybe a bit gaslighty to hear that. And I can understand, it feels like I didn't sleep. But there can often be some other things that are going on that we can address and see if we can get you to a better place if that's happening.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, absolutely. And obviously the sleep conference is not designed to help anybody with, like, extraneous insomnia. Obviously, you should go to a sleep lab, you should see a sleep specialist, a physician, trained, that can help you with that.

We're more focused on helping people with the things that are in their control and easy. Not necessarily easy, because not looking at your phone before bed, as I can attest, is not actually that easy.

I've been trying for a straight month to break that habit. It's harder than I thought it was going to be. So not saying that these things are easy, but we're going to outline what you can do for people that can do these things on their own.

That said, we've touched on this a little bit, but what is the correlation between anxiety and insomnia? Because I was actually really surprised, but this made total sense once I heard it through your book and the books of many other people, but, like I said, I also don't want to gaslight people and be like, your insomnia is just anxiety.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yeah. We actually used to think that anxiety disorders were what caused insomnia. But we know that actually it's a pretty bidirectional relationship now. And the same goes for things like depression or trauma, things like that.

So we know that if you're not sleeping well, it's going to increase anxiety or depression. So for some people, it could start with insomnia and then it ends up creating another anxiety issue.

But yeah, like you were saying, there is a really strong connection between anxiety and insomnia. And the reason for this is if you think about it, when you're under a lot of stress, if you're anxious about things, it's going to make your nervous system go haywire.

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So you're going to go into what we call fight or flight mode, meaning if you're thinking you're perceiving something as dangerous, almost as though you're being attacked by a bear, even though that's not actually happening, your mind and your body can perceive it in the same way.

And so as a result of that, when we're in fight or flight, of course our body is not going to want to sleep because we're preparing for danger and we're trying to keep ourselves safe. So the other system, the parasympathetic response, the rest digest system, it's not going to be activated as often and so that's going to then affect your sleep.

And so this is why we really want to pay attention to some of the anxiety that you might have around your sleep, and then how that might be impacting how you're actually sleeping. Because if you ask an average person who sleeps well, what do you do to get good sleep? They're going to be like, uh, nothing.

Meagen Gibson

I lay down and I close my eyes, as my husband says.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Exactly, right. So the thing we have to keep in mind is that we actually don't need to really do anything to sleep well. Our body is perfectly capable of naturally sleeping well on its own.

It's just that when we start to experience things like insomnia, we start to then worry, what if this continues? And what if I'm broken and I'm no longer going to be able to sleep again? And then we start researching what are the health consequences of sleeping well.

And I'm laughing, but it's hard, it's hard, right, because I get why we would be so worried about that, especially since there's so much messaging around sleep nowadays. And so it makes sense that then your anxiety would continue and it ends up being this never ending loop.

So this is why I say we need to try to keep things in perspective as much as possible. Because as much as sleep is important, it's not the only thing that's important. There are plenty of other things that are also important to your wellbeing and overall health.

And so, just paying attention. What are you thinking about your sleep? And how could that be making you feel maybe a little more anxious and aroused, and then affecting your sleep at night?

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, I'm so glad you mentioned the nervous system as well. As you said earlier, if you've had a life event or something that causes you great anguish, your nervous system is going to have an appropriate response to that event that may cause you to lose sleep.

I mean, it would be stranger if you had a big event happening in your life and you just went off to sleep like a baby. We would think that was actually a little bit more odd. And so I'm sympathetic to that.

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And then also things like pain, right? So if you've got sciatica pain or something that's keeping you up at night and disrupting your sleep, that's not necessarily insomnia. It's pain that's causing a loss of sleep.

But then that loss of sleep and your pain, if you go to lay down and you know the minute you lay down, you're going to be in pain and you're not going to be able to sleep, that's going to cause that anxious sleep that we're talking about that will contribute to your inability to rest. It's going to fire up your sympathetic nervous system and get you all prepared for the battle of trying to lay horizontally without pain. So a lot of these cyclical things that we're talking about go on, right?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yeah, that's another good point. And unfortunately, sleep does help manage your pain better too, so then it becomes that cycle. So, yeah, you definitely want to make sure to speak with your provider about how to best manage any chronic pain issues.

And what we know is that working on some relaxation strategies typically helps with pain and with sleep. So it could be something to look into. And again, not to invalidate it because it's an awful experience to be in chronic pain, but there are some things that you can do that are in your control as well.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. I'm so glad you said that just to validate people because there's nothing wrong, or there's nothing worse than when you're like, I can't sleep and I'm in so much pain, and somebody else is like, just relax. Oh, wow, thank you.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Easier said than done.

Meagen Gibson

Exactly. And you mentioned some relaxation techniques. And I'm going to put you on the spot because I read your book and I know.

One of the great things about 75 strategies for a better sleep, or I can't remember the exact title, is that you go through each one and it's so nice because you're like, here's what it's called, here's why it works. Here's how you do it. And then you do that 75 times.

So it's not some big book that you've got to understand a bunch of really, you don't have to understand the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system in order to get better sleep.

You've got these tactics lined up that are easy because it's going to depend. Like if you have a big life event, you might need one or two strategies. You might need to journal at night before you go to bed. You might need a bunch of the other strategies. If you've got chronic pain, you might want to do some body relaxation techniques.

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And so I love your book for that reason, that there's a technique for everything you might encounter that might be an obstacle between you and your sleep. So it was really well done.

But if I could put you on the spot and just have you tell people one or two relaxation techniques, especially body, if you're somebody that suffers from anxiety, it gets you out of your head into your body and relaxes your muscles and your mind for sleep.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yeah, absolutely. So there are so many different relaxation strategies. So it really is just about finding one that works best for you. And it might take a little bit of trial and error before you discover that.

The main ones tend to be either deep breathing strategies, or there can be what we call progressive muscle relaxation. Or some people will do guided imagery.

And then the last one, mindfulness. A lot of us have heard of mindful meditation by now. With mindfulness, the point is not actually to relax. The point is to start to become aware and to turn to ourselves in that awareness with kindness and compassion.

And it's actually a side effect of doing that, that we get relaxed. And so that does help us to sleep better over time. And so one of my favorite strategies within, or favorite tools within, mindfulness is doing a body scan, a mindful body scan.

And this can be a really good introduction to doing any mindfulness practice in which you might lie down or you can sit on a chair, wherever you're comfortable. And you just go through from your head to your toes, and the major areas, and notice, what am I noticing in this area? Is it cool, is it warm, is it tingling, is there pain?

Without judgment, trying to notice, or maybe there's nothing there at all. And it helps us to really pay attention to what might be happening in our body and people find that that gets to be actually very relaxing over time.

And there are specific body scan meditations you can do as you're trying to fall asleep, which can be helpful. However, we want to make sure we're not then using mindfulness like a pill. We have to do this meditation in order to sleep, but that can be one that many people find effective.

And a similar one that is used specifically to help us relax is called, as I was saying before, progressive muscle relaxation, where you are also going through different muscle groups, but what you're doing is you're tensing them and then relaxing them for a few seconds at a time.

And noticing the difference between the tension and relaxation feelings helps our body to go into that parasympathetic rest system, helps to trigger that relaxation response.

So, yeah, there are so many wonderful resources available for free online that have a lot of guided meditations and different relaxation resources. And I encourage everyone to try out a few, and maybe try it out a few times to see what would work best for you personally.

[00:28:07] Meagen Gibson

Yeah, absolutely, because like we both said, you might be struggling in a different way at a different time with your sleep, depending on what's going on in your life for that matter.

So I know you work a lot with teenagers and they seem to be a group with growing sleep pattern struggles. I used to teach at a college level and it was one of the main things that got in the way of a student's success, both in school and then after they graduated, was their ability to rest and have regular sleep cycles and know what their circadian rhythm was and that kind of thing.

So, what would you say and where would you start with, with young people that are struggling with sleep?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

There are a lot of teenagers who also experience sleep issues as well. So if you're a teen listening to this, or a parent of a teen listening to this, know that you're not alone in this struggle.

And a lot of the reason why we see an increase during teenage years is also because our circadian rhythm, so the natural time we feel most alert and most sleepy, it changes throughout our lifespan. So as little children, little children typically go to bed a lot earlier, wake up a lot earlier.

As you approach adolescence, what happens is that your circadian rhythm, your natural body clock, shifts so that you are actually feeling sleepy much, much later and waking up much, much later. And this is unfortunate because in most school systems, teens tend to have to be awake pretty early for class. Maybe 06:00, 07:00 A.M. Sometimes even earlier than that.

And so there's this real mismatch and that tends to cause a lot of problems. And of course, there are so many other things going on as you enter high school, too, and a lot of new experiences and stresses and a lot of comparison that can come up. And so as a result of all these things, that can cause maybe some chronic insomnia issues.

And where I start with teens is really where I start with adults as well. So I first want to, again, try to look at what might be happening. What's happened in your life recently? What changes have you been going through? And then what's really happening with your sleep?

So keeping a sleep diary and seeing, for a lot of teens, what ends up happening is because they have to wake up so early during the week, they end up sleeping in a lot on the weekends. And so when we're having a big jump between one day we might wake up at seven, and then the next day we might wake up at eleven or even noon, our body gets really confused.

So every time we wake up in the morning, our clock resets and it tells us it's a new day. And so if we're having a big difference there, our body is going to feel like we travel to a different time zone. So for a lot of teams, one of the major things that we work on first is trying to get a consistent time that you're waking up.

However, I will say if they're having a significant circadian disruption, there might be some other strategies like using melatonin that we might use that can help as well. But really, just like with adults, more than getting into the nitty gritty of behaviorally changing some of the time that you're in bed and when you're waking up, we also really want to work on managing anxiety and things like that as well.

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Because it is a really confusing, challenging period for many teens and young adults. And so we want to look at what could be happening. Is there a lot of social comparison maybe going on, especially with social media? And could you be maybe thinking about that a lot at night? Or are you on your phone a lot during the day?

And trying to work on, again, slowly maybe changing some of these behaviors, knowing that it's easier said than done, it's hard, but there are some things that we can do that are in our control that can help.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, and we discussed this earlier, actually before we had this interview, but it's the idea of performance anxiety or perfectionism, right? And the pressures, especially that seniors, both in high school and college, face.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yes. I do see a lot of time that people who might be struggling with just general perfectionism, it ends up coming out in their sleep as well, where especially, like I was saying, because we hear so much about how sleep can affect us during the day, we tend to attribute everything to our sleep.

So we might get really perfectionistic about our sleep as well and then start thinking, if I'm not sleeping well every single night, then it's going to affect my performance in school or my performance playing a sport or doing something else, and everything is going to be ruined and then I'm not going to get into that college I want to get into, et cetera, et cetera.

It ends up being like a catastrophe in the end. And while I can understand where it's coming from, we also want to pay attention to the narrative that we're telling ourselves. And no one is perfect. And I'm sure many people have heard this multiple times, but it's about managing expectations around that because sleep is not the be all and end all.

If you have perfect sleep, which is actually impossible, it's not probably going to get you to achieve the results you want. There's so many other things happening here. So we want to just, again, try to keep things in balance as much as possible and try to notice whether or not some of the perfectionism has crept into what we think about our sleep as well, because that can have a pretty big impact.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. It's like a law of diminishing returns, right? You've got a sleep tracker, or if you've got a bullet journal, and you're trying to get on track and trying to make a decision and do the right thing and then it turns into this data mechanism to further torture you.

And the mental math, I mean, anybody who's ever spent any time with a newborn knows the middle of the night mental math. I'm like, okay, well, if I get to sleep now, I'll get... We're doing the calculus, the advanced calculus on functionality for our daytime hours. But you do rest and you do not catch up, but as long as you don't think about it too much. Right?

[00:34:42] Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Right. That's the key. And we're all going to have thoughts, of course, but this is where mindfulness really does help, is learning to just notice and let it go. Our thoughts are not always facts.

A lot of the time they're not facts, they're just thoughts that we're having. It's just mental chatter. It might not actually really mean anything. So learning to detach a little bit more can often help.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, and I love the not attaching too much meaning to it. I mean, we're all guilty of that. I'm sure. And I have found through my old age and wisdom that if I sleep terribly one night, I just don't assign any meaning to it anymore, I'm just like, whatever.

And I used to work out really, really rigorously. I don't anymore. But I found, ironically, that on some of the nights that I had my worst sleep, I would have my best workouts. And I was like, oh, I guess there's no meaning there. There's no correlation.

Because I was like, oh, no, I'm going to have a terrible workout. I only slept 4 hours, so and so came to my room five times with nightmares about alligators or whatnot. And I would decide that I was never going to have a good workout. And then if I just didn't assign meaning to that night, went to the gym, I would have a great workout.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

That's excellent. That's such a great example of what I try to help people to notice, too, because what we do is we tend to, when we're having sleep issues, we really pay attention to things that are not going well and not things that are going well, just like you said.

Let's look at some of the data and start tracking it. Maybe you will have a good workout after a bad night of sleep, contrary to what we're often hearing. And so, again, it varies that no one's sleep is perfect and we can still do the things that we need or want to do even if we're struggling a bit. So, just trying to keep that in mind.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. Absolutely. Not ignore your body and your need for sleep entirely, but not assign too much meaning to whatever it is that's happening. Right?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Absolutely.

Meagen Gibson

Fantastic. Dr Moshfegh, thank you so much for being with us. How can people find out more about you and your work and your book for that matter?

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Yeah, it was a pleasure. People can find me online, my website through [werisepsychology.com](http://www.werisepsychology.com).

[00:37:02]

My book is called *The Book Of Sleep: 75 Strategies To Relieve Insomnia*. It's available on Amazon or different bookstores. I'm also on Instagram, [@drnicolem](#) as well.

Meagen Gibson

Fantastic. Thanks again.

Dr Nicole Moshfegh

Thank you.