

## The 7 types of rest

**Guest: Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

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### **[00:00:10] Alex Howard**

Welcome to this interview, where I'm talking with Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith.

And we're going to be talking about the seven types of rest and how identifying and recognizing the types of rest that we're deficient in will allow us to put in place an action plan to effectively address them.

Really, at the core of this interview is a key theme throughout this conference, which is the recognition that what happens or doesn't happen during the day has an enormous impact on the quality, and the depth, and the length of our sleep at night.

The more effectively you can learn to meet these different types of rest, the better your quality of sleep will be.

So, to give a bit of an introduction to Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith. She is a board certified internal medicine physician, work-life integration researcher and CEO of Restorasis, a workplace wellbeing consultancy company.

She is an international wellbeing thought leader, featured in numerous media outlets including Prevention, MSNBC, Women's Day, Fox, Fast Company, Psychology Today, Inc., CNN Health and TED.com.

She's the author of numerous books, including her bestseller, which we'll be talking about a number of the ideas from in this interview, *Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore Your Sanity*, including insight on the seven types of rest needed to optimize your productivity, increase your overall happiness, overcome burnout, and live your best life.

So, Dr Saundra. Welcome, and thank you so much for joining me.

### **Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

It is my pleasure.

### **Alex Howard**

So, I think this area of rest is a super interesting and super important one. And on the surface, rest sounds like a very, very simple thing. We need to have rest.

**[00:02:07]**

And yet for so many people, I think it can be such a struggle. They can struggle with fatigue, with insomnia, with not being able to really get the quality of rest that they know that they need.

And I'm curious as to, is that something that you recognize and see, and what your thoughts are of why people struggle?

**Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Absolutely. I think a big part of it is we have oversimplified it. For some people, when they hear the word rest, they automatically think it means sleep.

And so if they get eight hours and they're still tired, they don't feel like they have any other options, they don't really see that they are not exactly the same thing.

And I think a big part of that is, as a physician, if someone came into my emergency room and they said, hey, I have pain, that doesn't really help me even know where to look. It doesn't even give me enough details on where to begin to assess them.

And it's very similar when people come and they say, I'm tired. It is so nonspecific that it doesn't give enough details to be able to determine, well, what kind of tired are you? Where is it that we need to look at the area that's actually being fatigued and drained and depleted?

Because I think that is the key problem, that we don't really understand the places that we're depleted and therefore we're getting rest and we're doing restorative things, but we may not be doing the one where we have the greatest rest deficit in.

**Alex Howard**

I guess also there's often a difference between getting sleep and getting rest. Someone might say, well, I sleep enough, therefore I must be getting enough rest. What are your thoughts on that?

**Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Well, that's where most of my research is actually based around in that sleep and rest are not the same thing.

Sleep is a type of rest, with rest being defined as having seven different components is what we've discovered, at least seven different components.

And those seven include things like physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, sensory and creative. With physical having two components, the passive forms which includes sleeping and napping that everyone is aware of.

But physical also has an active component, that includes those things that help with your muscle fluidity, that helps with your circulation and your lymphatics, and all of those other aspects of your physical body.

**[00:04:31]**

And so we have to understand that when we only talk about rest in the aspect of sleeping, that what ends up happening is we are literally only looking at one part of seven different areas that can be filled back up.

And I think the connectivity there is that sleeping is absolutely important, obviously, right, that's why we're having this discussion. But rest is often the bridge that takes us from our waking hours into being able to have that higher quality sleep that we desire.

Our bodies aren't switches, we can just flick it and go into that calm, rested state. And so we have to see that there's a process for getting a body that's in a rested state that can sleep more deeply.

### **Alex Howard**

One of my realizations about the difference between rest and sleep was actually with our kids, particularly when they were really young, noticing that when they didn't get enough rest, actually they slept more poorly, they were more resistant about going to bed.

And it was a realization that actually the more tired they got, actually the more of an issue sleep became, not less.

### **Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

That is so correct. And it's the same for adults because one of the key types of rest deficit that we find with our research and with our assessment that we have online, is that many people have what we call a mental rest deficit.

And some of you have probably experienced this. You lay down to go to sleep at night, your mind is racing. You're thinking of your to do list the next day. You're thinking of the conversations you had earlier in the day. Your mind just will not settle down.

And so it doesn't matter how exhausted you may be, as long as you're experiencing that mental rest deficit with that busy brain syndrome, it will keep you awake all night despite being completely exhausted.

And so when you manage that, when you do some of the restorative activities and processes to help clear the mind, allow yourself to be able to get to that quiet space cerebrally, you're able to then sleep better.

And there are so many other examples of that. A body who's painful and tight and tense is not going to get as much high quality sleep as a body that's been stretched, or maybe that's a leisure walk to get the blood circulation flowing, or something to help it get into that more rested state.

### **Alex Howard**

In a sense, what I'm hearing you say, which is something that I think has become a real theme through the interviews of this conference, is that so much of what happens at night is a manifestation or a product of what has been happening or not been happening during the day, that those habits and those routines and those focuses really impact then what's happening at night time.

### **[00:07:17] Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

Absolutely. And I think that one of the issues is that because people are so resistant to rest in general, because they've boxed it up into this thing we do on the weekend. So, I'm going to rest on the weekend or I'll rest when I take a vacation or sabbatical, or some huge block of time that they're going to carve out to get the rest that they need.

When, really, what I'm referring to specifically are restorative practices you integrate within your day. This is not something that you do at the end of the week, or something that you do a couple of times a year to check it off your box so that you don't get burnout.

It's something that is actually integrated so that you're consistently restoring the places that are being depleted.

Because as long as we approach it as we're going to have these moments, these huge moments of rest, we allow ourselves to stay in these places of rest deficits which are going to affect not only our sleep, it's going to affect our personalities, our relationship, our ability to function at our highest capacity.

### **Alex Howard**

Yeah. I recognize in my own life that poor choices lead to more poor choices.

It's like the more depleted I become, the more likely I am to watch more crap TV till late at night, or not exercise. Or the more depleted I become, the less likely I am to go and spend time around, for example, friends outside of work, that then shifts my mindset out of being too focused on work things.

And I guess that's often the challenge that the poor choices that we make tend to gather momentum that then leads to more of the same.

### **Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

Absolutely, because most of what we're doing is not rest, it's escapism.

And so we get home, we're exhausted, we want to clear our mind, we don't have really the mindset of what it is we're even depleted in. Most of us don't even understand which type of rest we need.

So we try to just do something that we think is restful, which may be laying on the couch and watching a series or something, watching a couple of shows.

But if the rest you're really needing, which is what you were discussing, is social rest, is the rest of being around people who are uplifting and life giving and that are motivational and that feed you, that feed the part of you that got poured out in dealing with patients or customers or clients or kids or whatever that is where you're pouring out social energy, you have to be mindful of what relationships pour back into you to fill that bucket back up.

And if that's the rest you need, you can sleep for eight hours and you're still going to be exhausted in that area. You can watch TV for a week and you're still going to not fill up that area.

**[00:10:08]**

So that's why it's so important to recognize, what kind of tired are you? Where is the place of the actual depletion? Because you can't fix a problem you haven't actually identified yet.

### **Alex Howard**

You've referenced a couple of times this idea of seven types of rest, and you started walking through.

I'd love to break that down a little bit more and maybe we can define what the seven types of rest are, and then perhaps we can explore each of those in a little bit of detail.

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Yeah, sure. The seven types include the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, sensory and creative.

The physical we discussed a little bit with it having the passive and the active.

Mental rest specifically refers to clearing your mental space, being able to have clarity and focus and concentrate.

Spiritual rest is different for each person, but at the very core of it is that need we all have for feeling as if our life has purpose. It's that human element to it, that humanity, that compassion side, reconnecting with people and with something bigger than ourselves, with humanity in general.

The next would be social rest, which we talked about a little bit. It's evaluating relationships and how they pull from us. If they are relationships where we're always giving and doing things and in demand, or are they relationships that are pouring back into us.

Emotional deals with our feelings and how we are relating with the world. So, specifically looking at if we are allowing ourselves to be authentic, to be able to be open about what's going on with us, and have those types of just real experiences with people.

Sensory deals with our surroundings. So, being mindful of the sensory inputs that you're allowing into yourself, whether that's the gadgets that you're using, the lights and sounds in the office place where you work, whether that's really thinking about how many notifications you have on your phone. All those sensory inputs that then affect us and affect our behavior.

And then finally, creative rest. And that's looking at, how are you using creativity throughout your day? And are you allowing moments in your day where you are allowing yourself to be inspired?

Specifically with creative rest, that was probably the most interesting one and the one that we have so many people write in and ask us about, because they were experiencing this drain that they couldn't label with anything specifically.

And when we talk about creativity, many times people think about arts, artists and musicians, and these people we consider creators. But creative energy is used whenever we think outside of the box, whenever we problem solve, whenever we're being innovative.

**[00:12:46]**

If you're a practitioner, every time you diagnose the patient, you're using creativity because you're having to pull in different elements and piece it together to make a diagnosis.

So, there's a lot of creativity that's used, creative energy, and what are we doing though to pour back into that area?

One of the things that we found is that many people experience creative rest around bodies of water and around nature and when they're experiencing the creative, whether it's natural beauty that they're experiencing, or things like art and music and dance and theater.

But we have to be aware that that has a place in our life for a reason, and that it actually helps to pour back into us so that we don't experience those types of rest deficits creatively.

### **Alex Howard**

It also strikes me as you're speaking, Dr Sandra, is that there's a lot of individual differences here, right?

I'm thinking about my wife and I, for example, and we have quite a different sensory appetite, for want of a better way of putting it.

So one of the jokes that we have is that I'll walk into a room and I'll turn on music, because music is just my great love, and my wife will walk into a room where I am playing music, and she'll either want to turn it off or turn it down.

It's an ongoing joke in our lives together. And it's just a realization that she gets very easily overloaded in a sensory way, whereas the thing that actually soothes and calms my system is having music playing.

So I'd love to hear you speak. I want to talk more about these different types of rest in a moment, but also just the individual preferences we have, and differences we have, and the importance of identifying those.

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Oh, absolutely. You must individualize it. It's very intentional, and very specific.

We have a free assessment at [restquiz.com](https://restquiz.com) and at date, over half a quarter million people or so have taken it.

And one of the things we're finding is that a lot of times, couples and families will take the quiz together, specifically for the reason you mentioned, because how one person needs rest most is usually not the way their spouse is needing rest.

And on the reverse of that, how one person enjoys rest, even if they need the same type of rest, can be completely different than the person who's living with them, because it is very specific and very individualized.

**[00:15:07]**

I think one of the things that we have to stay aware of is that even your own rest needs can change. If you're expending energy in one way and one season of life, that doesn't mean that's always going to be the one rest deficit you're battling with.

Chances are, as life changes and things change and roles and all of that, you can very well have fluctuations in which types of rest you're needing, even from day to day if you have a very kind of open way of living.

In other words, you're not very systematic in what's happening every single day, your rest needs can fluctuate greatly.

### **Alex Howard**

It strikes me also that one of the pieces that's really key here is one, being able to identify and listen to their own body, their physical body, their emotional body and so on.

Because from what you're saying, that the information of what we need is there but we actually have to be attuned enough to be able to listen to and respond to it.

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Yes. I think the body really tries to help us in any way it can. So, it's constantly letting us know when something does not feel at its best.

So, a lot of times we'll say, I just don't feel great today, but we don't really try to get down to the specifics of what is it that doesn't feel well, that doesn't feel like it's been rejuvenated or restored?

And so, you do need to have some ability to do a little bit of some self awareness and a quick self check. One of the things I like to do in the morning when I wake up, the very first thing I ask myself is do I feel energized?

Because if I completely feel tanked then it's usually not one rest deficit. There's usually a couple of things that went wrong and I just completely omitted my own needs for restoration throughout that day, which happens.

We all have those days where everything goes crazy. But when I notice that, then I'm able to then, on that particular day, be very intentional about making sure I do incorporate some of those things back in.

And so I think we all need to do that. Instead of waking up and saying oh, it's just another Monday, even though it's Thursday, we wake up and take a moment and actually evaluate what happened yesterday.

Was there something that occurred that really drained a specific area of my energy? And did I do anything other than moan and complain about it to actually improve it?

Because if you didn't, chances are that place is still depleted, and it's our responsibility to fill it back up. Most of the time our families and friends don't know the type of rest you need. They don't know what kind of day you have.

**[00:17:51]**

Even if you tell them, they don't know how to help solve it for you because you have to have some ownership of it yourself to make those intentional changes and to do those restorative activities.

**Alex Howard**

I guess also what's really implicit in what you're saying is that the recognition or the definition of the type of rest that we need then in a sense is the pathway towards what we actually need to do to address that deficit, right?

And so, the difference between being physically tired and perhaps having a social or emotional deficit, is going to be different in terms of what we're going to need to do to address it.

**Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

That's correct. And that's why in my book, *Sacred Rest*, that's where I dive into all the research and go through all of this.

But within the book, one of the things I made a point of doing is the very first part of each chapter on the different types of rest, I specifically go through, these are the symptoms you would have with this particular type of rest deficit.

Because I found that that was the number one thing most of my patients struggled with. They would just come in and say, doc, I'm tired.

And I'm like, what am I supposed to do with that?. I need a little bit more information so we even know what direction to go in.

And so we had to have some conversation initially on just, these are some of the symptoms if you have an emotional rest deficit, and these are some of the ones if you have a physical. So that people could start at least doing a bit of self recognition in the types of rest deficits, so that they had some ownership of their own diagnosis.

**Alex Howard**

It's interesting as well because it strikes me that people maybe, some of these I think perhaps are quite more obvious to people like physical, I'm physically tired. Or mental, I'm mentally tired.

But what I really love about this model is that you're also bringing in some pieces that perhaps may be less obvious, for example, around sensory, right, that it may be that someone thinks, I'm tired so I need to go and lie down or sleep, or perhaps even less helpfully, I'm tired, I'm just going to go and watch a load of rubbish TV.

I'm a big fan of TV, so I'm not speaking against TV, but doing it in a way that actually it's more sensory overload, which actually may result in not having the impact that one is trying to have.



### **[00:20:14] Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

That happens often, because escapism is easy. You turn on the TV, there's a bazillion shows streaming at any time throughout the day.

So, it's very easy to slip over into those known rest activities that we all hear about without really doing a rest activity that is helping us. And sometimes, like you mentioned, doing something that can be further hurting us.

I do see it a lot, particularly with sensory. One of the things that we tell people is that if you have a sensory rest deficit and you're very sensory overwhelmed throughout your day, you may find that you have this agitation that comes as the day goes on.

It's like you become very high strung, very agitated at the smallest little things or you're not able to enjoy sensory rich experiences, like intercourse.

So there's so many different layers to that, because if you're sensory overwhelmed, and I hear this a lot with women, particularly if they have children, young children, I don't want my husband touching me at night. It's like just another pair of hands on me.

And the moment I hear that, I automatically know it's a sensory overload syndrome because little hands touching you all day long, big hands are no different. It's just more sensory input and you can't differentiate the two. You're already overwhelmed.

And so being able to recognize that sometimes helps us to not put labels on people that are not really theirs. It's just their response, trying to figure out a way to get rid of some of the excessive sensory input.

### **Alex Howard**

I think that's a really interesting example though, isn't it, because what can often happen in a situation like that is that there then becomes a blanket pushing away any kind of contact.

But the difference between, for example, that pulling quality of children and what might actually be a really nourishing, supportive quality of one's relational partner.

So, I guess sometimes being able to define what's actually happening here and then it not become a blanket pushing away of all, but a recognition of what's going on and what's needed.

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Yes. Absolutely. One of the most interesting emails I get tends to be from gentlemen who write me back, thanking me. Not because they've read my book or anything, because their wife read the book and all of a sudden now they're actually getting more sex than ever.

And it's funny because what they tend to say is I had no idea, by just giving her twenty, thirty minutes of downtime to reclaim her body so that she can kind of diffuse and un-mommy, so to speak, it makes all the difference.

But it seems so simple, and I think that's the problem. We try to over complicate it.

**[00:23:02]**

Rest really is simple when you're doing the one that you need, the one that really is affecting how you are enjoying your life, your relationships, and your world. But if you don't recognize it, you can make it much bigger than it needs to be.

I get really distressed when people say, I don't have time to rest. What I hear is, I don't know what rest is. So I'm trying to do what people are telling me. I'm trying to take a two week vacation, I'm trying to take a thirty day sabbatical and I don't have time for that.

No. Neither do I. But I think we all have time for some of the simple things we can integrate in our day so that we do feel restored.

### **Alex Howard**

Also, I was thinking earlier when you were talking about social rest. And I was reflecting for myself that I'm someone that is relatively introverted, despite appearances. I put myself out there quite a lot.

I spend a lot of time here in the office around quite a big team here, and around people. And so my tendency can be that when I'm not at work, to just want to be at home and with my wife and kids and so on.

My wife though was spending a lot of the time in the week with the kids and then wanting at weekends to go out and be social. And for a few years I was quite resistant about that.

And then I came to realize that actually when I surrendered to it when it was the right thing for me, that actually I got something very different from social contact with friends, people that I wasn't working with, for example, or I wasn't in a work role of being a therapist, or a boss, or a trainer or whatever.

I could drop all of that and just be in contact in the moment. And there was a real nourishment from that, that actually I wasn't getting in the same way in other social contacts. And that for me was a very helpful recognition.

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

And that is the recognition I think we all have to do, is really look at our relationships and understand that there are relationships that can be both. They can be socially pulling, and they can pour back into you.

But a large amount of our relationships are pulling from us socially. If they're needing something from you, customers, clients, patients, family, kids needing something from you, they are pulling from your social energy.

Doesn't matter how much you love them. Doesn't mean they're negative people.

### **Alex Howard**

It's almost like the more you love them, the worse it is sometimes.

### **[00:25:29] Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

It can be. It really can be, because those relationships are more likely to get one sided. It's like when you're serving customers and patients and clients, you know you're there to serve them, so you know you're there to pour into them, and they're not responsible for pouring anything back into you.

However, your family, your kids, your spouse, they will go both ways. And if we're not careful, they can become one sided relationships where they're always pulling and draining you, and you never allow them to pour back into you.

I think that's why it's so important for adults to have some of those adult friendships and relationships with people who don't need anything from you. You just enjoy spending time in their presence and their company.

But I love that you also brought up that introverts and extroverts need different types of social rest and different amounts.

Introverts tend to do better with social rest with a few people that they can have deeper connections with.

Extroverts. They like a lot of people, which is why the pandemic was so hard for a lot of them. They like a lot of people and they get energy from actually being around larger groups of people and all the social interaction.

But both introverts and extroverts need people and those relationships, the amount and the quantity is different.

### **Alex Howard**

It's funny. I have a little joke with my wife sometimes that we get invited to some fancy dinner party and I say, I really hope we can't get childcare because then I can stay home with the kids.

There's for me, exactly that, being around lots and lots of people with lots of really surface level conversation is just draining.

And I guess, again, what it makes me realize is that what I'm really hearing in what you're saying here, is there's an important piece here of recognizing the individual differences, but also really having that self awareness of what we need.

And then I guess having a certain amount of courage to set the boundaries that we need to then be able to make sure we get those types of rest and we protect those types of rest.

And I think sometimes putting those boundaries in place can be quite challenging for people, can't it?

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

It can be, but those boundaries are key. And I think that once you start erecting some of those personal boundaries around your own rest needs, it becomes really second nature to you.

**[00:27:55]**

Because you'll start understanding that in order for me to be the best me for my family, or for myself for that matter, in order to enjoy my life and have the energy and the passion and the desire to do the things that I want to do, I can't allow people to step all over my own personal rest boundaries.

Because the reality is, it is easier to omit rest and just stay drained like the rest of the world than to be that person that says, you know what? Right now, what I need is quiet time and not going to the dinner party. Right now, what I need is to turn off this radio and just drive home in silence because I need a little bit of sensory reprieve from the world.

It takes more courage to do that. And I think we do have to empower people to be able to understand that when you do that, you're not trying to take something away from the other person, you're trying to actually be a better person for them.

Because what I find is when someone tends to, and there are some compromises don't get me wrong, but what I find is when someone consistently does that without taking their own rest needs into consideration, what happens is they then start resenting that person for stepping all over their boundaries, for not respecting their needs and what they need to be able to really enjoy life.

#### **Alex Howard**

Yeah. I guess what happens is that, as we were saying a bit earlier, the more depleted we get, the poorer choices that we make.

But I guess also the more we can find ourselves frustrated at other people not meeting our needs, when actually we're also not meeting our needs, and so we're finding ourselves getting sucked into that pattern.

#### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Yeah. And I always tell people, don't judge someone else's rest tactics and strategies, what they're using to restore themselves.

I get a lot of emails from women, particularly, who will send me an email and say, I need you to do a consult with my husband. He's not resting. And I'm like, okay, let's find out what's going on!

And usually when I sit down with these gentlemen, what I end up hearing is, hey, I'm working this job where my mind is racing twenty four seven, and I'm on the screen all day long. I'm getting pulled from twenty different directions. And I go outside, and maybe I'm chopping wood or maybe I go for a run. And when I come back in, I feel so much better from being out there. But my wife tells me I need to rest, and I'm telling her this makes me feel good.

And what I have to help them both see is, the rest he needs isn't physical rest. He doesn't need to sit and lay and whatever it is she thinks he's needing, Yoga and all of that.

That's not what he's needing. The area he's depleting throughout the day is his creativity and his mental ability.

**[00:30:43]**

He's processing. He's problem solving. So when he's out there for a jog, no, he's not physically resting. But while he's jogging, he's concentrating on his cadence. He's concentrating on his breathing, which is basically a form of mindfulness.

He's narrowed his mental process down to those two things. And so he's cleared his mind out of everything other than breathe and pace.

And if he's doing it outside, he's getting that creative rest of being out in nature. Same with chopping wood. Robotic activity. The mind can go to a quiet place.

And so for him, he's restoring the places that he's being depleting throughout the day, even if it doesn't look like what his wife thinks rest should look like.

### **Alex Howard**

It's also interesting what you're saying. I guess it goes back to what you're touching on in terms of the category of spiritual rest.

The being around nature and beauty, and an environment which, in a sense, draws ourselves out of ourselves, I guess, has a big impact.

I think one of the things that can happen, particularly living in cities, is we get more and more in our heads, and more and more in a sensory overload.

I guess it's often hard to think our way out of that place because it actually thinks us more into that place. And there's something about putting ourselves in environments that almost do the work for us by drawing us out of that.

### **Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

Yeah. I think that is a good point because for some of us, because we are in such overloaded sensory input areas, or we're in places that we don't necessarily find inspiring or that don't really awaken that creative awe and wonder and beauty inside of us, there is an intentionality that has to happen.

It can be much simpler than actually having to go on a vacation, because I find that sometimes people say, well, I live in a big city where there are no trees. There's no nature.

So, bring nature inside to you. One of the interesting studies that we saw was that I think it's 60%, 58%, I think it's the actual number, of people experience creative rest around bodies of water.

Most of the world doesn't live anywhere near a body of water. But, what they did was they checked the MRIs after someone had looked at a body of water. They checked it after someone had looked at an image of a body of water. And then they checked it after they'd looked at colors that resemble bodies of water.

And the interesting thing was that the activity in the brain was the same in all three instances for those people who said they experience creative rest around bodies of water.

**[00:33:27]**

If the person experienced creative rest in the forest, they didn't have any response in any of those areas. So it was interesting in that if that's you and the place that you're inspired is nowhere near your physical locale, you can have pictures on your phone.

You can have something on your computer. You can put a nautical theme inside of your office space.

Whatever it is that inspires you, bring that element into your own living environment so that you are seeding creative rest throughout your day without actually having to think about it. You've automated it.

Because I think that's the way that most of us need to start thinking about rest. How can we automate it? Can we set timers in our house to dim the lights at a certain time, or dim our computer screens?

Or maybe set something that reminds you to take a stretch break after you've been working in flow for two hours, to just stop for a minute and make sure your neck is not in pain or something.

Automate as much of it as possible, so that you don't have to always feel like you have to think about, oh I got to get seven types of rest.

No, chances are you're already doing some of these naturally, even if you didn't know what you were doing. But if there's one or two that is really a struggle for you, try to automate it as much as you can so that you make it easy for yourself.

### **Alex Howard**

I really like that because I think one of the challenges we can all have is we get in a groove of how we're functioning, and it can be hard to get out of that groove.

So if we're in a very mentally overstimulated place, we just stay in that place until something happens that moves us out of that. I love that idea of building that into our daily habits and routine.

What are some other ways that can help us doing that? Setting alarms or timers sounds good, and having automated things.

What else can help break us out of those repetitive patterns that we can find ourselves stuck in?

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Yeah. So for mental rest, one that I find that a lot of people benefit from, if you're the type of person who you lay down at night or you get great ideas in the middle of the night and your mind is just always processing, have a notepad. A piece of paper. Something at the bedside.

So that whenever you feel like you're ruminating over information, that you have a place to do a brain dump, or mind dump as some people say. You're just going to jot it down on a piece of paper whatever those thoughts are, whatever that issue is.

And in the process of writing it down, it helps your brain to feel the ability to release it, because it no longer feels like it has to be responsible for holding on to that bit of information all day, all night long.

**[00:36:08]**

Same with to do lists. A lot of people do a checklist in their head before they go to sleep. Just jot it down, because as long as you keep ruminating over it, it's going to keep you from going into deeper levels of sleep because your brain is like, oh no, this is my job tonight to remember this till we get to tomorrow morning.

Another example would be if you're someone who a lot of your time is spent serving people and pouring out and you have a tendency not to have a lot of opportunities for social and emotional rest within your day, set aside time within your home that is intentionally for that.

I have a lot of couples who, I call it the five minute challenge with your spouse, rather than saying how's your day? as you're walking around, not really listening or paying attention to each other, take five minutes to actually face each other.

Whether it's at the dinner table, whether you're sitting, wherever, actually look at each other. Look in each other's eyes and ask the question. Let the other person answer, not letting them get away with one word, oh, it's good, it's fine.

But actually getting a moment for both social and emotional rest, and that they can share not the specifics of what happened in the day, but how they're feeling about the day, because that's the part most of us don't get.

We don't get an opportunity to do true emotional rest where we are sharing what we felt about our day, not the details.

Oftentimes sharing all the details is just emotional trauma. We're just trauma dumping on our friends and family and all of that.

Just how did the trauma or the event make you feel? Because that bit of vulnerability sometimes is enough to reconnect hearts. I've seen some amazing things happen within couples just by spending time eye to eye.

One of the studies that was then looked at how much time a couple spends eye to eye. And the majority of the time that they spent eye to eye was when they were arguing and fighting.

### **Alex Howard**

Oh dear.

### **Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Otherwise, they were passing each other without looking at each other. They were eye to screen, eye to kids, eye to bills, eye everything else, but they actually weren't looking at each other.

And I mean, how do we all fall in love? We fall in love looking into each other's eyes.

So it's really interesting to me, and when I wrote *Sacred Rest*, I was writing it because I was burned out. I wasn't writing it trying to help relationships, even my own relationship.

**[00:38:32]**

But it's interesting to find that as we are more rested, as we get better sleep, it impacts every aspect of our lives. Our success within our careers, our success within our relationships, and really our physical health, because you want to take better care of yourself when you feel better.

**Alex Howard**

It strikes me, as you said, Sandra, that it's almost like we normalize to how we are habituated to feeling.

And so one of the challenges is that if someone is so used to being physically tired, or so used to being emotionally tired or spiritually depleted, that it's like if they go to a point where it becomes even worse, they might work hard to get it back to the equilibrium, to what they know to be balance.

So that when the pain is really bad, there's motivation, but then that motivation stops when we get back to the place that we're familiar with.

And I guess sometimes the real challenge is to go beyond that, to discover actually how good it can be if we really are rested, what could happen to our relationships, or our creativity, or our purpose in the world?

**Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith**

Yeah. I truly believe most of us are chronically in a rest deficit because we simply just don't know any different. We don't know what it is that's depleted. We don't know where to begin to even solve it.

So we've just come to this, we've gotten to this state where it's I'm tired, the world's tired, everybody's burned out. That's just how it is. That's how we're living nowadays.

And it's just not true. It's just simply not true. There are so many ways to stay restored, to stay energized, to stay excited about life, and to stay in a place where you're not always feeling drained, but you actually feel like you're pouring from a full cup, so to speak.

And I think each of us have to determine, are we willing to do the work of that? It's just like you see bodybuilders and you're like, wow, I want those kind of abs.

Well, they didn't wake up with those abs. There is some work that had to happen to get to that place. And so can we all get to that place? We all don't have the discipline to get to that place, but we can all get to a place where we feel like, this is good. I feel like I've improved.

And so I'm always challenging my own patients to, do you feel good? Do you wake up happy about your day? Do you wake up excited about your life? And I'm not saying you don't have problems. I'm saying do you feel like you have the energy to confront whatever the problem is? Because that's the difference.

I'm not going to get rid of all your issues and all that life brings, but if I can help you become energized enough so that you can approach each day feeling like I have the internal resources I need to attack this day with everything that's within me, that's my goal. Simply put, that's my goal, to help people get to that place.



**[00:41:34] Alex Howard**

I love it. I love it. And I guess to really discover what we're capable of when we are cooking on all cylinders, in a sense, and we have all of our capacity.

Dr Saundra, people that want to find out more about you and your work, I'd love you to say a little bit about where they can go. You mentioned the rest quiz, and just say a bit more about what people can find.

**Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

Yeah. So, the assessment that we have is the rest deficit assessment. It lets you see which of the seven types of rest that you're most deficient in. It's at [restquiz.com](https://restquiz.com). Very simple. [restquiz.com](https://restquiz.com).

My main website is [ichoosemybestlife.com](https://ichoosemybestlife.com). From there you can find out about all the different resources and books that I've written.

And all of this that we're discussing is in my book, *Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore Your Sanity*. And it goes over the seven types of rest and gives examples of how to get more of each type of rest in your day.

**Alex Howard**

That's awesome. Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. I think this is a really important piece, and I love how you've broken it down in such an accessible way. So thank you so much.

**Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith**

It's been a joy chatting with you.